The Golden Link





THE GOLDEN LINK

OR

THE SHADOW OF SIN,

A STORY OF OUR TIMES.

BY

ERMINA C. STRAY.

"Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things."—Matt. xvii. 11.

"And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."—Acts iii. 20, 21.

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To

THE LABORERS

in our Heavenly Father's vineyard,

and the

STRUGGLING CHRISTIANS,

young and old,

these pages are inscribed by the

AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

I HAVE written this story with an earnest Christian purpose. I trust that it will be read as prayerfully and earnestly as I have written it, and that the ideas I have tried to convey will be understood.

Nearly all my characters and scenes are drawn from life, and not overdrawn either. I have met many a Josephine Trent, although I have taken the liberty to soften and tone her down, as it were. I have told the story of poor, misguided Celeste, because I could not picture her sin, nor Leslie's temptation, in any other way. And the sins and temptations that befall the nineteenth-century woman, through her own weakness and vanity, and man's inordinate love of self, should not be sparingly dealt with.

My heroine, Leone, is not a perfect, but a perfectly natural woman. Earle's perfectly well-balanced organization is certainly possible, and what I believe always should and would be, did the world understand the God-given law of love aright.

The Twentieth Century Woman has been discussed more or less in the world, and the ideas advanced on that subject voice the sentiment of all interested in her behalf.

I have prayed earnestly for divine guidance in this work, that this book may be for the good of humanity and the honor and glory of the Lord. And, through the grace of our loving Saviour, I am your friend and sister.

ERMINA C. STRAY.

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THE GOLDEN LINK.

CHAPTER I.

LEONE.

A LONG line of carriages, wending its solemn way over the dusty road and up the graveled drive of the "city of the dead!" A halt beside the new-made grave while mourners and friends alighted to perform the last sad rites over the remains of the wealthiest citizen of Glendale, haughty, aristocratic Bernard Trent!

A pause while the last words were uttered, the last prayer offered by the young minister, and then the casket was lowered gently down, into its cold, dark receptacle, and a broken, half-stifled sob, all the more intense from its long repression, smote sadly upon the ears of friend and neighbor alike, as they turned with one accord to gaze upon the black-robed figure of Bernard Trent's mourning daughter.

Mrs. Earle, gently supporting the swaying form, murmured:

"My poor child! God knows I would help you to bear your sorrow if I could. But you must

be brave, dear Leone, and remember that 'He doeth all things well.'"

But Leone Trent could not see nor understand that there was any thing right or well. She could only feel that God had dealt very unkindly by her; that he had not been merciful; that the world only a few days ago full of rosy lights and golden gleams had suddenly grown cold and dark. She shuddered from head to foot and sobbed aloud.

Earle Thornton drew her hand gently within his arm, and leading her away, said:

"You are tired and worn with your long, sad watch. I am going to take you home."

Leone grew strangely quiet under the magnetic pressure of that hand so full of sympathy and strength; and her tears, so long repressed, dropped silently under her veil, as the young pastor of Glendale chapel helped her and his aunt, Mrs. Earle, into their carriage, and sitting opposite, allowed Leone to shed, unrestrained, her first tears of grief over the loss of her father.

Hers was that bitter kind of grief, so hard to bear when there is no hope; when the loved one has gone out into the great unknown; when the darkness of death has settled upon this life, and there is no light beyond; when the vale is full of shadows and the river a mist of tears; when God seems so far off, and, oh, so uncertain.

The stone house on the hill, with its surrounding grounds, its magnificent drives and terraced walks, could be his home no more. And Leone moaned aloud as she crossed the threshold over which he was carried for the last time but a little while ago, and went into the parlor that would know his presence no more.

Mrs. Earle kindly removed the heavy veil and mourning bonnet, and Mr. Thornton placed her on a chair, saying gently:

"It is but natural for you to mourn, Leone, but remember, sore and heavy trials come to every one."

"It does not seem as though any one ever suffered such a hopeless loss," was the low spoken reply. "Papa was all I had, you know."

"Yes, I know, but God's ways are past finding out in these things, and—"

Leone flashed an imperious look from her dark eyes as she coldly said:

"I do not know anything about your God, Mr. Thornton, remember. If he is what you teach, he would never have taken my father. O, no, no. It was a cruel thing to do."

A grieved and almost shocked expression came into the eyes of the young clergyman. What could he say to comfort and assure this high-spirited, willful, imperious and undisciplined girl? It was a difficult task for him, who had as yet so little experience in scenes like this,

and never before heard such words from the lips of the young and fair. But he remembered sadly that Bernard Trent was a worldly-minded man, and had always been an atheist; a gentleman and a scholar, but an infidel.

"There is no other life. Death is the end of all things. And the more we get out of this life, the better off we are," was his favorite maxim, an exceedingly dangerous theory, which he had spared no pains to instill into the mind of his daughter. But, happily, Leone remembered her mother as a Christian, who used to hear her bed-time prayers, and tell her the story of Jesus. There was doubt and uncertainty in her mind. Could her mother have been deceived, or was her father mistaken?

Bernard Trent and his wife had loved each other as well as most husbands and wives love; but there was not that perfect union of heart and mind and spirit between them that God meant to be between husband and wife when he placed Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden.

This was plainly shown in Leone's imperious nature, in the quick flashes of temper, like heat lightning athwart a summer sky, and in various other ways. But there was pure gold there, a grand womanhood to be developed, as Earle Thornton was not slow to discover. And so, as it was his deep, strong and tender nature to do, he gently and kindly said:

"You must lie down and take a good rest, Leone. You will be better for it. I will call again tomorrow. Aunt Helen will stay with you tonight."

"You are very kind, but I do not need any one. Mrs. Marks and Kitty and Tom are all here, as yet; I shall soon enough be alone."

"What do you mean, Leone?"

"Do you not know?

"I do not."

"I mean that I am poor as well as orphaned. Tomorrow there will be no one in Glendale poorer than Leone Trent."

"I am at a loss to understand."

"Papa speculated heavily and lost everything. That was the leading cause of his death; poor, poor papa!"

"And you are left helpless and alone?"

"I am left helpless and alone. But don't think that I blame poor papa, for, indeed, he was not to blame. He only wanted to increase his wealth for me, all for me, and failed. It was really what killed papa, to think he had robbed his only child, and that there was no one to care for my dreary future. That is what he said."

She told the story brokenly between her sobs, and they knew it was not her future life of poverty that troubled her now. She was not mourning over her lost fortune; she was weeping for the father whom she should never see again.

"Never, never," she moaned more to herself than to her auditors, "never again, never again. I shall never see papa again."

"There is One who makes the crooked paths straight, who makes all things right in his own good time," the young minister asserted reverently, never before feeling so lost for words to comfort a mourner; never before longing so intensely to pour a ray of light into a darkened soul. But Leone was in that perverse state of pain and misery where light cannot penetrate. There was not a ray of hope, not a morsel of comfort. She had gathered her misery and her sorrow to herself, and closed and barred the gates against all intrusion. Her sorrow was her own. What right had he, this poor, struggling young pastor, to offer comfort or consolation, or dare to tell her what her father said was not true. She lifted her eyes coldly to his face; there was an ominous glitter in their sombre depths, as she said proudly:

"You *have* been very kind, but further intrusion on my sorrow is unnecessary."

Earle Thornton bowed gravely, not a little hurt by the cruel words, and said:

"I have no desire to intrude, only to help, but will go now and call again tomorrow. Aunt Helen will remain, if you like. Good-bye."

He took her hand kindly and pressed it gently, and was gone before she could reply. And

Leone, conquered despite her pride and arrogance, leaned her head down and wept bitterly.

"Dear child," Mrs. Earle began gently, "you will certainly make yourself sick."

"I am not crying altogether for papa now," Miss Trent sobbed, "I am crying because I was so unkind to Mr.—Mr.—Thornton—who is so good to me. I have such a proud, unhappy temper, and—and—I never tried to control it; for poor papa always laughed at me, and I never knew before how unkind I could be."

"Don't cry over that, dear; Earle does not mind. He is altogether too well-balanced to feel much aggrieved."

Oh, perversity of human nature! A moment ago Leone was crying because she feared she had grieved her best friend; now she was ready to cry with vexation because she had not hurt him. She said:

"You are very good and kind, Mrs. Earle, but your nephew's suggestion is not necessary. Indeed, I would rather stay alone tonight."

She spoke with that quiet decision that characterized every thing she did, and Mrs. Earle, feeling instinctively that there was no appeal, bade her goodbye and left her.

CHAPTER II.

EARLE.

"I AM seriously alarmed over Leone," Mrs. Earle observed, as she passed her nephew his tea, and then proceeded to pour her own. "I have never met just such a girl before, have you, Earle?"

"No, I never have," and the sigh that followed immediately after told plainer than words that he never had. He felt the peculiar, penetrating look of Aunt Helen, however, and roused himself instantly, saying with his usual gravity:

"Leone is very finely organized, but a little unbalanced, owing to her early education, no doubt. There is good ground there, only it requires a little cultivation for the seed, which will eventually take deep and lasting root."

"You are always so strong and hopeful, Earle. I believe you never despaired of any one's salvation yet; but I confess I do not see how Leone Trent is going to be reached."

"Perhaps not, yet she will be reached, for God has a work for her to do, that no other woman can do."

"Earle, do you know what I sometimes think?" Aunt Helen asked abruptly, as she leisurely sipped her tea and ate her toast.

"Not exactly," with one of those rare smiles that lit his face into wonderful beauty, and made him, as Mrs. Earle always said, perfectly irresistible.

"Well, then, I almost believe that you are too visionary for a minister of the gospel. You are, I beg your pardon, Earle, dear, but you are inclined to sentiment, and romance, and all that."

"Am I? And why should not a minister of the gospel be sentimental, and romantic, and all that, as you say, Aunt Helen?"

"Well, you know people expect ministers to deal with stern, unvarnished truth; to teach and preach the Word alone."

"To crush down all human nature, and be living, speaking automatons. Is that what you mean, aunt?

"Something like that, I'm afraid."

"Well then I am quite sure the world expects something different from what God intended. I am quite sure God intends his children to cultivate all of their human faculties, to as perfect and divine a standard as it is possible for mortals to reach. We have emotional natures. Our

Master wept when they told him that Lazarus was dead. He was compassionate and joyful and sorrowful in a like degree with ourselves. He was sentimental enough to teach in parables, and romantic enough to retire away from the world, and commune alone with his Father amid the solitudes of nature. And he has said, 'Follow me.'"

"I give it up, Earle, as I always have to," Mrs. Earle laughed. "Will you come down this evening?" she continued.

"Perhaps. Whom do you entertain?"

"Mr. Carrington and two young clerks in the village, Mr. Howard and Mr. Gray."

"I will try to drop in during the evening. Good-bye."

Mrs. Earle repaired to the parlor and tried to read until her visitors were announced.

Mrs. Helen Earle was a widow, and sister of Earle Thornton's mother. Her husband had been a very dear friend of both of Earle's parents, and they named their only son in honor of their friend and brother. Mrs. Earle had been a mother to Earle, and he was a very dear son to her. She was thinking of him tonight, as she sat alone, and her thoughts were not untroubled. Her eyes had been opened, today, with a shock that she could not forget. Earle felt more than a brotherly regard for proud, imperious Leone Trent. His heart had gone

out of his keeping, she knew, and yet at present, it was all unknown to himself. She knew that his great, compassionate, tender soul was thinking of Leone and the darkness of her present life; that he was striving and praying to bring a ray of light to her; that he only realized now that Leone was in danger, but would awake sooner or later to the knowledge of his hopeless love. The names Leone and Earle were dancing grotesquely over the pages of her book, and she scarcely understood a word she read, and was glad when her visitors were announced.

Mrs. Earle possessed the rare faculty of gathering young people, especially young men, about her; and she employed this gift to the best advantage.

Mr. Walter Carrington was a rising young barrister, who regarded Mrs. Earle very highly and felt a deep and friendly esteem for Earle, even if he could not understand his religious views.

"He's a good fellow, a kind-hearted, whole-souled, good fellow; but then he's a little off, you know, about some things, a religious enthusiast, if you like," he explained as they were on their way to the parsonage; and Irving Howard and Morton Gray accepted the explanation, wondering how a young man of brilliant promise could bury himself alive, as it were, in the ministry. Irving Howard and Morton Gray

were comparative strangers in Glendale, but Mrs. Earle met them kindly, and they were soon conversing at their ease, thinking her a very fascinating woman, and wondering why the young ladies of their acquaintance were not as well worth cultivating. And neither knew that the secret lay in the simple fact, that they met her as an equal and a companion, and not as a plaything and a doll. And when a man meets a woman on the ground of equality, he soon learns to understand her at her value, be it small or great. Undoubtedly, young ladies are as much to blame, for affectation and mock modesty are distasteful to the sterner sex, and Aunt Helen was neither affected nor prudish.

"I am very much distressed over Leone Trent. I fear she is neither happy nor likely to be very soon," Mrs. Earle said, gravely.

"Because of her father's quite sudden death, I suppose," Irving Howard observed.

"Yes and no. Perhaps I ought not to have spoken as I did, but she has been constantly in my mind this evening, and I could not help it."

And Aunt Helen glanced covertly at Walter Carrington, but that young man betrayed no knowledge of, or curiosity over the subject.

Leone Trent might have been in the Arctic seas, or a Fiji Islander, instead of the daughter of the late Bernard Trent, whose last will and testament he was to read tomorrow, for any sign he gave.

Mr. Thornton had come into the room, quietly and unobserved, and was an interested listener at this moment. Anything about Leone would interest him henceforth and forevermore, though as yet he did not know the reason. He knew that whatever touched Leone, touched him; but he thought it was his interest in the welfare of her soul, his sympathy for her present sorrow. And as the man's heart and soul were large and full of sympathy and love for all God's creatures, he was perhaps the more easily deceived in regard to his feelings for Leone.

Aunt Helen knew that she had drifted in the wrong direction, and her tact brought her off the shoals at once.

"Earle has come in," she said. "Now we will have some singing, and I will play your accompaniment."

The four young men were well adapted to the four parts, and formed a very good quartette, with their hostess as accompanist, singing that grand old hymn anthem,

"On Jordan's stormy banks I stand,"

after which there was more conversation, then the good nights, and the guests departed.

"Shall we go into King's?" Morton Gray asked in a half hesitant manner, as they drew near the bar-room of the Glendale house.

"Not tonight," was Walter Carrington's brief reply.

"Why not tonight?"

"I don't know why, only I never yet went straight from Earle Thornton's presence into a bar-room or saloon."

Irving Howard laughed, although, if he had told the truth, he would have owned that he, himself, did not want to go to King's tonight. Morton Gray said half sneeringly:

"Carrington is turning pious."

"I plead not guilty to that accusation, but maintain what I said before. Thornton has a good influence over me, and I like his society. We all know that wine, beer and brandy, are not good moral agents; that under the influence of such stimulants, we are more or less addicted to vice. But, of course, I am not my brother's keeper; you can go if you like," Mr. Carrington returned.

"I certainly should if I wanted to, but I do not," Morton Gray said, with an assumption of indifference that he was far from feeling. Neither he nor Irving Howard felt their usual desire to go into King's tonight, but they had not defined the reason as accurately as Walter Carrington had; perhaps because they did not so thoroughly understand the laws of attraction and repulsion, which come under the head of magnetism.

CHAPTER III.

THE LETTER.

THE last will and testament of the late Bernard Trent had been read, and to the amazement of all but Leone herself, only a few hundreds were saved out of the wreck of thousands. Speculation, the demon that so often possesses the rich man's soul, had led Bernard Trent on and on, until his fortune was completely swamped, and but a pitiful mite left to Leone, after all expenses were paid. She knew what was coming, therefore she listened in quiet indifference, and bowed gravely when Walter Carrington handed her a letter and said:

"Your father left this in my care, for you, at his death."

"You have been very kind, Mr. Carrington," she said, "and I thank you."

"Not as kind as I would be if you would let me, Leone," he pleaded.

She waved her hand impatiently and turned her head away, but answered kindly:

"You know I cannot; it is quite impossible."

"Have you no heart?" he asked bitterly; forgetting the time and place in the impetuosity of his nature.

"No, I think not. I am quite sure I have none, for I never feel any responsive echoes," Leone returned coldly, at the same time beckoning Earle Thornton's approach.

Walter Carrington turned impatiently away. He did not care to meet the young pastor just now. He was vexed and out of patience with Leone and himself. Why could she not reciprocate his love? He had a good practice and steady remuneration, and she was left suddenly alone, and poor, and with nothing in the wide world that she could do. She had not been trained to one single useful thing. She had a smattering of all the accomplishments and sciences, but was thoroughly versed in none. And in these days of competition and education, something beside superficial knowledge is needed to gain a livelihood.

Leone was painfully conscious of this too, as Earle came and stood by her chair; but some way there was strength in his very presence, and she did not feel half as desolate and alone as before.

"Can I help you, Leone? he asked in a low voice. But the girl was too proud to give up yet. She could not say, "Yes, for I have no one

else to whom I can go. I want you to tell me what I am to do." And so she answered coldly:

"No, I thank you. You are very kind, but I do not need any help."

Oh, Leone! Leone! how very many have stood where you stand, longing for help, with an intensity of pain, and yet throwing it back even to a higher source, with a polite, "No, I thank you."

She did not tell him that she wanted him there because he was all the hope or anchor she had; that she felt the very earth slipping away from under her feet; but he felt it and pitied her all the more intensely, and prayed earnestly though silently, that the presence of the Holy Spirit would draw near, and touch this troubled heart with that peace which the Comforter alone can give. And Leone felt the burden of her misery roll away, and her natural self-reliance coming back, and lifting her eyes, heavy with unshed tears, she said:

"I will not detain you any longer. See, they are all going;" as one after another they came and bade her a formal adieu, and only the young clergyman and Aunt Helen were left.

"You had rather we would go, Leone?"

"I had much rather."

"When shall I see you again?"

"Is it necessary?" with a surprised look in

her eyes, which were proud and cold again.

"Perhaps not, yet I had hoped it might be;" Earle was constrained to say with more of pain than bitterness in his voice, as he offered his hand in parting, to the girl who had suddenly grown into her old haughty self again. Never since he entered the ministry, had she darkened the door of Glendale chapel or any other church, as far as he knew. She had been her father's constant companion. He had taken her to concerts, operas, theaters, balls and lectures, but never to hear a sermon.

"It is sheer nonsense, Leone," he was wont to exclaim. "They're all a set of fanatics, who theorize what they never practice. Religion is but a cloak for iniquity. I can hold up my head and say that I am as good as Deacon Sprague or Mr. Morley. I never was found drunk like the one, nor tried to cheat a man out of his horse like the other."

And Leone felt that it was true. Her father was upright and honest in deal. He was a strong temperance advocate. He was a gentleman. And one such man wields a more deadly influence over young, enthusiastic, and well-bred people, than a dozen dissolute men can possibly attain. They see no harm in him. They seek his society and are corrupted by his views. But they shun the vicious and the bad, because that inherent germ of good will not let them listen

to things so utterly foreign to their natures, until the intermediate seed of evil has been sown and taken root.

As Mr. Thornton and Aunt Helen departed, Leone repaired to her own room to read the letter that her lawyer had given her. She felt instinctively that she must be alone when she read this letter; that there was something in these pages that her father would never have revealed had he lived. She wheeled an easy chair up to the window, and sinking into its luxurious depths, unfolded the closely written pages and read:—

"*My Dear Leone:*—

I have something to write to you which I could never say and which I wish you need never know. Did it ever occur to you, my child, that your father had a dark secret, which he would never reveal, but for the feeling of doubt and uncertainty that is always present where you are concerned; not doubt nor uncertainty in regard to my preference and love for you, for you are my *dearest child.* But oh, Leone, Leone, forgive! there is *another!* In my early married life I formed a most disgraceful liaison with a handsome, vivacious French girl, Celeste Lascelles, who soon after married Henry Harper, and was ruthlessly cast off by that over-virtuous young mechanic, who refused to believe that her daughter was his. You and the *other one* were very near of an age; and now comes the most bitter point of all, and the reason why I must make this disgraceful secret known to you. At the time of your birth I was away, and upon my return was met by Harper in a towering rage of indignation, swearing vengeance; affirming that he had already commenced a life-long revenge, that should fall upon the head of my legal offspring; that he had seen both girls, and neither I nor Celeste would ever know which was which. Whether he changed you in your cradles or not I

cannot tell; but the deadly fear is ever present that he did; and my legal offspring is to be persecuted and tortured, fulfilling the law, that the sins of the fathers must be visited upon the heads of the children. And, Leone! Leone! I'm not quite certain that I've always taught you right. As I stand face to face with death, I feel sore afraid to go out into uncertain darkness; and maybe there is a just God whose wrath I have incurred. Maybe your mother was right and I was wrong. Perhaps we *shall* know, and it won't be annihilation. Be that as it may, I can only say that Harper, who has written to me yearly in the same strain, has his revenge, and I shall never know whether you are the *other one* or not. I can only implore your forgiveness, and tell you to go to my mother's. She will receive you and give you a home, and she need never know my secret. You are not fit to compete with the world or take care of yourself. And I beg, as an assurance of your forgiveness, that you will go to Lakeside and live with mother. It is the last and only thing you can ever do to please your unhappy father. BERNARD TRENT.

The letter dropped away from her shaking hands and she dropped her shamed face upon the dressing-table with an agony she had never known before. Her father! Her father to be guilty of all this! Her father, whom she had loved and honored and set up as a king among men! Her father, to ruin and disgrace a helpless woman! That was the culminating point. Her father, guilty of a social sin that stood before her pure eyes as dark and damnable as the crime of murder!

Her mother had taught her the ten commandments given to Moses amid the fire and smoke of Mt. Sinai, and had told her that they were

laws that must not be broken. And Leone felt sure that one should be as religiously kept as the other. Her father had ruthlessly broken the seventh, and the dire and horrible consequences must fall upon her own head and the unoffending head of that other one. She had lost faith in her father. That was the next bitter thought that came to her. And there is nothing that will rend and crush the heart like losing faith in one we love, or to feel anger for that one.

"For to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain."

As yet, she thought not of herself, but of her father's sin, and the wrong he had done the handsome, vivacious French woman, who, for aught she knew, might be her own mother.

Suddenly she sprang to her feet and cried aloud:

"My mother! No, no, no, no! I cannot have it so. I cannot think that my mother was a bad woman, and that the woman I have loved and revered was nothing to me."

It had come home at last; she was thinking of herself now. The weight had fallen with crushing force. She, proud, high-spirited Leone Trent, might be nameless as well as homeless. She shrank and shivered and moaned, hopeless and helpless, unable to stem the current of her woe, until Earle Thornton's influence seemed to

hover over her with benign and pitiful tenderness, and the words her father had written came back again:

"Leone, I'm not quite certain that I've taught you right. Perhaps there is a just God."

Her father doubted. He was *not* sure, then. Some way in that bitter hour she was glad that he was not sure. The doubt he had implied was the only resting-spot her feet could find. Maybe there was a God and he would look down and pity her. Maybe he would make it all right. Maybe she was not "*the other one.*" But then she felt a great throb of pity and pain for that other one, and hoped if there was a God, that he would stay with her also, and help her too to bear the misery and the shame, when Harper's vengeance should fall. She had but a vague and undefined idea of God and his love. She had heard but little and read less. As yet, no thought of the Book of all books came to her mind, only a dreamy wondering where and what God was; or was it all a myth, a fable, an allegory? Ah yes, it must be so; for if God were love and truth, as Mr. Thornton had said that day, then he would never have taken her father, and left her such a legacy of shame. But then came the words of her father's letter:

"I feel sore afraid to go out into uncertain darkness, and maybe there is a God."

That letter from beginning to end was a source

of anxiety and trouble to poor Leone. She writhed under the lash of shame. She wept bitterly for her lost father and her lost faith in him. But at last the calm of despair settled upon her troubled heart. There was much to do, much that must be done, tonight. Tomorrow her father's creditors would be here, and before that time she must be away. Yes, she would go to Lakeside, to Grandpa Trent's, and grandma would be a mother to her, she knew; for her girl friends were always telling about their grandmothers being so exceedingly kind, and if there was anything on earth for which Leone now longed, it was kindness and sympathy and a mother. And here a sharp twinge of horror and pain cut through her heart, as she thought of the woman who was perhaps her mother. Did she want her or her love? Oh, no, not yet, not yet!

She bathed her aching eyes and then went resolutely down to the library, to gather up the the private property and correspondence of her father. She would leave no tell-tale marks for the world to gloat over. He had sinned, but he was still her father. Even as Jonathan, that most loyal son, would have shielded his father, so would Leone hide her father's sin from the world.

Among his private letters was one containing a photograph, and with that feeling of shame and pain still with her, Leone read Celeste's ap-

peal for her, for their child, since Harper had deserted its unhappy mother. With a shudder of repulsion she looked upon the pictured face of the piquant, dark-eyed, dark-haired French girl. Alas! so were her eyes and hair dark; but her expression was proud, serene and noble, giving promise of that highest type of beauty, the beauty that indicates a lofty soul; while poor Celeste's was merely of the earth, earthy, so easily swayed by passion, because the higher endowments of the soul are unawakened and unguarded.



CHAPTER IV.

BOB BASSET.

"WHY! dear Miss Leone, are you going without saying good bye to anybody? What will Mr. Carrington and Mr. Thornton and Mrs. Earle and everybody else think?"

"They will think that I am a very ungrateful girl, no doubt, and forget me in a day;" was the bitter reply, as Leone stood buttoning her gloves with the utmost composure, and only the ghastly pallor of her face, and the dark rings under her eyes, told that the lethean waters had broken over her soul.

"But you do look, dear child, just fit to drop;" and Mrs. Marks, dear, kind soul, broke into a flow of tears and cried aloud.

Leone's lip trembled slightly, but she did not break down. She only said in a low voice:

"Don't, Mrs. Marks, I'm sure you don't want to make it harder for me than it is. I *must* go. This is not my home, and never can be again. I should have to part with you and Kitty and

Tom sometime. A few days make but very little difference."

"Oh, but to go off so sudden-like. I can't get reconciled to it no-ways; indeed I can't."

"Sha'n't we never see you again, Miss Leone?" Kitty asked in a low voice, wiping her eyes on her sleeve, and trying to be brave for Miss Leone's sake.

"Yes, I doubt not that you will, for I am quite sure I shall come back to Glendale sometime, if only to see my dear old nurse; and now, goodbye, Mrs. Marks, and you too, Kitty. Don't cry for me, please."

And yet, down in her heart, Leone felt glad that they *were* crying for her. Somebody cared for her, if only a little. And human nature is the same all over the world, in the high and the low, the rich and the poor, and cries out for human sympathy and love.

But the carriage was waiting and Leone hurried into it, that she need not miss this train that was to bear her away from her childhood home, into a world of strangers and an unknown future.

"Goodbye, Tom;" she said to the faithful coach-man, who had followed her into the car, after seeing to the disposal of her baggage. "You are a good, honest fellow, and I know that you will do well in the world."

For answer, Tom turned his head away and blew his nose vigorously, saying:

"I beg parding, Miss, but I've got a misable cold in my head, and it makes my eyes kinder wat'ry. But goodbye, yes, goodbye, and the Lord forever bless you, Miss; and would you mind readin' that sometime?" and Tom gave her a letter, with a shy and awkward air, at the same time grasping her hand in a hearty, farewell clasp, with the words:

"God forever bless you, Miss, and take care of you, and I know he will."

"All aboard!" was shouted in the usual singsong tone. The engine gave a puff and jump, and good, honest, faithful Tom skipped down the steps, blowing his nose again, as a last, parting salute, and thinking to himself:

"Poor Miss Leone! It's hard times for one so young, and knowing nothing about God."

But the train thundered on and on, and was soon lost to sight and sound of Tom, and Leone, now utterly forsaken and alone, cried miserably under the heavy folds of her mourning veil. Everything was dark and drear, and life a miserable failure. There was nothing for which to live; and why did she live? Why didn't she die when papa did, and not live to learn that terribly disgraceful secret, that would cover her own life with shame and sorrow, forever and ever.

But there came a more hopeful feeling with the memory of Grandmother Trent. She would at least find one friend. For though she had never met this grandmother, she was sure she should love her for papa's sake; and papa had said: "Show your forgiveness for me, by going to my mother." And Leone had already forgiven her father for the wrong he had done her. Hers was not a hard and unforgiving nature, but tender and loving, loyal and true. The sin he had committed against Celeste Lascelles and his own trusting wife was quite another thing; and yet she felt quite sure that she should in time forgive that also, for he was her father. She always came back to that: he was her father.

The train was slacking up at a station, and she raised her head and looked out. A little group of country people stood upon the platform, and a swarthy, dark-bearded, middle-aged man was swaggering back and forth with his hands in his pockets.

"Meester Basset, Meester Basset, you'd better get aboard now?" cried an old German woman, as she laid her persuasive hand upon the arm of the half-drunken man.

"Oh, I'm all right. I can take care of myself, granny, don't yer fergit it," was the reply with a grand flourish of the arms, while "All-

aboard!" sounded again, and the poor old German woman cried:

"Meester Basset, Meester Basset! do git aboard; the train is goin' now."

"I'm all right! I know when to get on;" Mr. Basset continued, as he leered around upon the few people collected on the platform, with that drunken leer, which always says:

"You can't tell me anything, I know it all, and more too."

And then, just as the engine moaned and shrieked, and the train trembled through its whole length, Mr. Basset gave a leap for the platform of the car, and fell. There were mingled cries and oaths, and a general uproar among the people on the depot platform. The rope was pulled, the brakes applied and the train stopped. And Leone, without knowing why, found herself the first on the ground, and the first to reach the injured man. Her veil was thrown back, and her pallid face and swollen eyes told all too plainly of her bereavement, even without her mourning garments.

"Where are you hurt?" she asked, pitifully, as she touched the fallen man, who, she saw at once, was not seriously injured.

"Nothing but my hand, Miss, which is only wrenched and bruised; and if somebody'll help me up, I want to go on that 'ere train."

He did not know it all now. He felt quite

stunned and helpless, and willing to be aided. He was helped on board, and the train again put in motion ; and he sank into a seat in front of Leone, actually faint and sick with the pain he suffered.

Leone was roused from her apathy. Her compassionate heart could not endure the sight of suffering, without longing to comfort and aid.

"Your hand pains you;" she said, leaning forward to speak to her new acquaintance.

"Yes, Miss, somewhat."

"Something must be done for it. I will do it up in a cold-water bandage;" and rising, she made her way to the water tank, and saturating her own dainty handkerchief, returned and applied it to the rapidly swelling and bruised hand of the now thoroughly sobered Basset.

"Thank you, Miss, you be very good," he said, looking at her curiously, "and it does feel better already."

"I am glad it does ; but oughtn't you to stop at the next station, and have it properly cared for ?"

"No, Miss, I want to get to Lakeside today, and to Lakeside I must go."

Leone settled back suddenly. The mention of Lakeside had brought it all back. She too was going to Lakeside. What strange fatality was it that had thrown this man in her way ? Ah, Leone, you will live to know that Provi-

dence, and not fate, rules and reigns! A few moments later, the stranger turned around and looked her squarely in the face.

"You've been awful kind to me, Miss, awful kind. 'Tain't every fine young lady like you that would be so good to a half-drunken wretch. But you'll always have a friend in Bob Basset. Bob Basset never forgets a kindness."

"You are Mr. Basset?"

"Well, yes, my name's Bob Basset, at your service."

But little more was said between the two, for Bob Basset felt that he was no companion for this girl, even though she was kind and gentle to him. The intuition of our nature always tells us whether or not we are congenial companions to those we meet; and when at last Lakeside was shouted, Bob Basset arose to get off, and turning back to say goodbye to Leone, saw that she also had risen.

"Do you git off here too?" he asked.

"Yes;" was the brief but kind reply.

They both got off. Leone took a cab at once. Bob Basset looked after her a moment, then taking the handkerchief from his injured hand, studied out the name in the corner: "LEONE TRENT."

"LEONE TRENT!" he said to himself. "No, I can't do it. I can't never do it, now."

CHAPTER V.

AT GRANDFATHER TRENT'S.

THE golden autumn day was drawing to a close. The shadows were long upon the lawn, and the Trent farm lay under the setting sun, in all its half-hearted thriftlessness; for everything about the farm and buildings testified to the shiftlessness of its owner. The very shingles on the roof were discouraged, and the ancient clapboards loosely clattered in the evening breeze, and told a tale of dismal torture; of long winter nights, when their whirring monotone had told of the rising wind, or the changes in the weather, and Grandfather Trent always said:

"As soon as this 'ere storm is over, I must nail them boards on, or the old shanty won't hold together much longer."

And grandmother invariably replied:

"You'll think they don't need nailin' on when the wind don't blow."

In the low, old-fashioned kitchen, the table

was laid for supper, and an appetizing odor of baked potatoes, sweet biscuits, and fried chicken, filled the room; for Sam, as grandmother said, was a master hand to live, and as he paid his board, she was willing to get good victuals.

Sam, being the grandson, was heir expectant to the Trent farm. Sam's mother was Eliza Trent, who had married Joseph Marston. Joseph and Eliza died long years ago, and Sam was brought up by his grandmother, not exactly "by hand," like poor Pip, but something in that style. And now Sam was at work in the box-factory at Lakeside, boarding at home, and paying his board, and all went well.

He came up the leaf-strewn path tonight, a stalwart young man, with his dinner-pail on his arm, and whistling the "Sack Waltz," which was just then very popular in Lakeside, in consequence of all the girls having had it for a music lesson; and the air was easily caught by their gentlemen acquaintances.

"Supper is ready," he cried cheerily, "and so am I! I'm as hungry as a hunter!"

"We'll eat then;" Grandma Trent exclaimed tartly. "I'm tired to death, and nobody cares whether I live or die."

"Oh, yes we do, granny! What on earth should we do for fried chicken, and sweet biscuits?" Sam said, without the least idea of un-

kindness, but in a tone of levity that had become second nature to him, and was entirely owing to his surroundings and teachings. He was naturally kind-hearted, good tempered and cheerful; but the peevish fault-finding and bickering of his grandmother had at last wrought this new element into Sam's nature. He did not want to quarrel with her, and he could not constantly deny her assertions, so he took this rather questionable way of staving off her attacks. With a scowl upon her face that had become perpetual, Grandma Trent drew up to the table, Sam and grandpa followed suit, and at once fell to the discussion of the supper.

"I ought to have someone to help me;" grandma continued, as she poured the tea. "I'm gettin' too old to have the care of everything."

"Sam'll be gettin' married by'm by, and then you'll have his wife to help;" grandfather observed, in his slow, quiet way, so directly opposite to his wife's quick, jerky, angular ways and words.

"Oh, sho on Sam's gettin' married! I want someone now."

"Wal, then, I guess I'll have to hire a girl."

"Hire a girl! Jonathan Trent, are you crazy? We've got lots of money to hire girls with!"

"You don't expect to get help without paying for it, do you?" Sam asked, reaching over for his third biscuit, just as the hack from the vil-

lage drew up to the front door, and the hackman said :

"This is the place, Miss. This is Jonathan Trent's."

"Who on earth has come now?" grandma cried in nervous trepidation, as she rose from the table and peered out of the door, in time to see Leone get down from the cab, and pay the driver, who was now busily unloading her luggage.

"Come to stay too!" she gasped. "Look at the boxes and chests and bundles! A widder, I should think! Look at her veil! What on earth shall I do with her?"

Grandmother Trent was not a friend to visitors. She did not like company. They always put her out so, she said, and she didn't want to be interfered with anyway.

But by this time the slender black-robed figure had come to the door, which Mrs. Trent was holding open, out of curiosity instead of hospitality.

"Are you Mrs. Trent?" she asked, in a sweet, low voice, which touched Sam, even then, as being full of tears, as he afterward expressed it.

"That's my name;" Mrs. Trent answered, in her most gracious manner; while her voice changed to a mournful minor key, in which it was always pitched before company.

"Then you are my Grandma Trent, and poor

papa said I was to come here to live. Oh, papa, papa!" and with a cry of despairing homesickness, Leone sank upon the threshold; and leaning her head against the old, weather-stained casement, sobbed aloud.

She had borne up as long as she could. She could not endure the pressure upon heart and brain another moment. Everything and everybody were so different from what she had expected. The kitchen was dark, dingy and dismal, and not over-clean. Poverty and shiftlessness were plainly stamped on every article indoor and out. Grandpa was so taciturn and cold, and the young man, still sitting at the table, so awkward and constrained; and grandma, on whom she had built such hopes,——Oh! this last was the worst of all! She was deeply disappointed in her father's mother. For with that sudden and clear intuition, so natural to some women, Leone had read her grandmother, and read her right; and the reading had bitterly shocked and troubled her sensitive heart.

"O, papa! why did you? why did you?" she sobbed, with a feeling of rebellious pain and passion, to think her father had imposed such a heavy duty upon her at the last, and doomed her to such uncongenial surroundings.

"Good land! you ain't obliged to stay here, unless you want to;" Mrs. Trent exclaimed, with a good deal of warmth, her fiery nature

ignited at once, to think this stuck-up girl felt that her father's childhood home was no place for her.

"Don't, don't, mother, don't! You don't know what you're talking about. This is Bernard's girl, and she's in mourning, don't you see?" Grandpa ejaculated, at last, his voice shaking with suppressed emotion, as he arose and came to the door, and putting out his trembling hands, lifted Leone up, saying:

"There, don't cry any more, don't! Your grandma is real glad you've come, only she's nervous. We're all glad, Sam and all of us. Sam, come and speak to your cousin, and then she'll tell us all about it."

But already the poor old man knew all about it. He knew that Bernard was dead, although they had not been apprised of the fact. He knew that here was Bernard's daughter, homeless and alone, sent to them for protection. And as Sam came forward and laid his hand upon his cousin's shoulder, she felt the sympathy that he could not speak, and leaning her face against his great, boyish heart, sobbed bitterly. At last she said brokenly:

"Tell them, tell them that papa is dead, and he sent me here to live. I have no other home, and nothing in the world."

"Bernard dead! Bernard dead!" grandpa moaned over and over, as if trying to get used

to the terrible sound of the terrible words. "Bernard dead! The last one gone!"

Grandma had broken down, and was crying with all the force of her nervous, irritable nature. But Leone, after the first feeling of homesickness and despair, had rallied, and was herself again. Her father had sent her here, and she must not rebel against his last will and wish. It would be better by and by, after she got used to her surroundings. She should like her grandfather, she knew, and Sam; but, O, she was so cruelly disappointed in her grandmother, whom she had hoped would be a mother and a friend.

"Mother, maybe Bernard's girl would like some supper;" Grandpa observed, thinking it time something was done for the comfort of their visitor, who still sat with bonnet and wrap on. "And maybe she'd like to take off her things. Go right into the other room, Sam'll show you where, and make yourself at home."

And rising, Leone followed Sam into the spare room, and proceeded to lay aside her outer garments.

"Never mind granny;" Sam whispered, in a half-awkward, half-kind way. "She means well, but she's queer."

Yes, she was queer, and Leone understood instinctively why her father and his parents had not been more intimate,—why she knew so lit-

tle of Grandma Trent. And what she did not intuitively understand, she learned before she had been long under the roof of the old Trent homestead.

Now, however, a place was cleared for her at the table, a cup of tea poured, and Mrs. Trent came in and pressed her to come and have a bite of supper.

"I should 'a thought you might 'a sent a word to your father's mother;" the old lady began, severely, as Leone took her first sip of tea.

The sorely troubled girl put the cup down with a choking sensation, and replied:

"I—I—You see, Mr. Carrington attended to everything, and—perhaps—he didn't know."

"Who is Mr. Carrington?"

"Papa's lawyer."

"Your father was rich, I s'pose?"

"Papa lost every thing but a few hundred dollars, before he died."

"Humph! I thought like enough, as he was always too stuck-up to come and see his poor old father and mother. I always said retribu tion would overtake Bernard, and now——"

"Josephine, don't! Don't you see it makes her feel bad? And Bernard wasn't so much to blame, after all."

"Who was to blame, then, I'd like to know? His poor old mother that toiled and slaved to bring him up, I s'pose! I worked myself to

death to bring my children up, and then never got 'Thank you' from one of them. But children are an ungrateful, undutiful set, and they don't realize what their parents endure for 'em."

This was poor Mrs. Trent's favorite hobby,—the ingratitude of children and the self-sacrificing lives of parents. And Mrs. Trent is not the only parent that dwells at length upon this besetting sin of children, totally unmindful of the incontestible fact, that no child was ever yet responsible for coming into the world. And when parents realize this truth and stop repeating that worn-out sentence, "No child ever pays for its bringing up," there will be less ingratitude in the world, and a closer relation between parent and child.

"Never mind, mother, I'm sure our children were as good as anybody's children;" Mr. Trent ventured, in a soothing voice.

Mrs. Trent sighed dismally, and noticing that Leone had not even tasted her supper, but only drank her tea feverishly and thirstily, she exclaimed with a sudden revulsion of feeling:

"Land a' massy! You hav'n't eat a thing. Do try some o' this quince sauce; Sam likes it awful well."

"No, thank you, I do not feel hungry," Leone faltered, "only very thirsty and tired."

"Of course you're tired. It's over a hundred miles from Glendale, hain't it, Jonathan?"

"Yes, nearly a hundred and fifty."

"What's your name, anyway?" Grandma asked, curiously watching the pale, tired face, with the pathetic droop about the grieved lips, and the eyes swimming in unshed tears.

"Leone."

"*Leoan!* Land, what a name! but that's just like Bernard, and I've heard he married an awful stuck-up, tony kind of a girl. Do you remember your mother?"

A curious train of thought was rushing through Leone's brain at this inopportune moment, and she answered unsteadily:

"Yes,—no,—that is,—I don't know."

"Don't know whether you remember your mother or not? Well, that's queer, I should think."

"Granny, don't! you're enough to drive anyone crazy;" Sam cried, half angrily, wholly unable to witness this torturing cross-questioning of his cousin any longer.

"Yes, mother, the girl is tired out; she'll be better able to talk in the morning;" Mr. Trent mildly observed.

"That's it! That's always the way! I never do or say anything, but what you're both against me! That's *always* the way! And here, I brought Sam up from a child, and he's no more respect for me than if I was a stick of wood. But come on, if you want to go to bed; but I shall have to

set up ever so long yet, to do up the work, tired as I am."

Leone arose and followed her grandmother, turning in the door that opened into the little parlor, off from which her room was situated, to say good-night to her grandfather and her cousin.

"This'll have to be your room;" Mrs. Trent said. "It's the best room in the house, and I've always kept it for company; but you'll have to have it; for there ain't no other."

"Oh, I don't want your spare room; I can sleep anywhere;" Leone returned.

"No, you'll have to sleep here. I s'pose your things all came with you;" grandma continued ruefully, wondering where they could put them all, anyway.

"All but my organ and books, which will come soon."

"So you've got an organ, have you? I should s'pose Bernard would a' got you a piano, as rich as he was."

"I did have a piano and an organ, both, but I felt as though I could never play upon the piano again, and so I left it to be sold."

"Well, make yourself at home. Goodnight. I've got all that work to do up, you know." And grandma hastened into the kitchen to wash her dishes and express her opinion upon the turn of affairs, in pretty round terms:

"We're as poor as we can be now, and here's Bernard's girl to take care of; and I don't believe she'll lift her finger to do a chore. I hinted around two or three times about the dishes, but she didn't even act as if she knew what I meant."

"She is tired tonight, granny; I'll help about the dishes;" and Sam, unconsciously softened by the presence of his mourning cousin, began to clear the supper things away with a great bustle and clatter, until Leone in her little room, thought her grandmother must be an exceedingly energetic person, especially when Sam dropped the dishpan, which went rolling across the floor; and grandma's high-pitched treble voice cried:

"There, you've done it now. Go 'long and set down. I can get along better without you." And then, in a lower tone, she continued:

"She's got a melodeon, and a passel of books comin'. I never could abide any of them squeakin' things. I s'pose she'll play and read all day, and I'll have the drudgery to do. That's the way Miss Hermon's girls do."



CHAPTER VI.

"THE OTHER ONE."

THE morning meal was ready in the old farm kitchen, and Sam was hurriedly dispatching his portion of it, for it was later than usual, and at the factory of Barstow and Barstow, dilatory habits were not tolerated, and every man and boy employed was required to begin work at half-past six in the morning, and work twelve long hours.

"We don't have no ten-hour foolery nor no slouching here;" the elder Barstow was wont to say on every occasion when fewer hours for work and more for recreation was broached by Nathan Deane, who alone of all the Barstow factory hands seemed to realize that they needed something besides unending labor, which at the most only brought enough to keep themselves and their families from want.

"But we could do better for you, if we had proper recreation and more time for study and general information."

"All nonsense! I never study nor read nor never go out for pleasure. Besides, if you don't like the rules, you can quit, you know."

But Nathan Deane did not quit, and the senior partner very well knew that he would not. There was no other trade to which he could turn his hand, and a family was depending on his labor for their meager support. And it was an evident fact that Barstow and Barstow were growing yearly richer and richer, and their men ground down to starvation wages and a lifeless existence.

Sam belonged to this shop, and though he made good wages, yet he often rebelled at his lot, so very different from that of young Fred Barstow, who was sent to school, and permitted to enjoy any amusement he pleased; but when Sam demurred at his hard lot, his grandmother always promptly said:

"Poor boys can't do such things."

"O, you think I never want to go anywhere, granny!" was Sam's discontented comment.

"It's no such a thing; but poor folks have to live without things that rich folks can afford to have;" she would say, until Sam hated the very name of poverty, and wondered why everybody could not share alike.

"It ain't right for old Barstow to have everything;" he grumbled discontentedly. "Nate Deane says the Barstow's are growing richer

every year and their hands are growing poorer."

But this morning Sam was in mortal fear lest he should be five minutes late and be docked two hours, the usual custom in the factory, and though the men and boys rebelled at this treatment, yet they swallowed their wrath, pocketed their pride, and kept at work. What else can you expect of a broken, disspirited set of men, who have worn the yoke of tyranny and oppression, until they are in some respects but little better than "dumb driven cattle."

"I should think Bernard's girl would get up to breakfast;" grandpa mildly observed, as he drank his strong, black coffee, and looked expectantly towards the door of the spare room.

"You didn't call her, did you, granny?" Sam asked, as he picked up his dinner-pail and started for the door.

"Call her! No, I didn't. If Leoan can't git up without bein' called, she'll lay abed for all o' me."

Sam shot out of the door and hurried on his way, while grandpa said:

"Maybe you'd better look in; she may be sick. She looked bad enough last night."

"O, sho! I don't believe she's sick any more than I am. She's been brought up with servants to wait on her. But she won't get waited on here, you may bet."

Still, Mrs. Trent felt constrained to go to Le-

one's door. "She might be sick, as father said, for she did look fit to die last night, and no mistake;" she said to herself. And the first glance at the face, last night so pale, now so flushed with fever, filled her with surprise and alarm, and she hurried back to the kitchen with the words:

"I'll bet she's got small-pox, or something. Her face is red as fire; and we'll all catch it. O, dear! whatever did make her come here with a catchin' fever!"

Mrs. Trent was mortally afraid of contagious diseases, and in her estimation nearly every thing was infectious.

"Why! is the girl sick?" Grandpa Trent inquired with interest.

"I'm afraid she is; and whatever shall I do?"

"She'll have to be took care of, if she's sick, of course."

"I should think I had enough to do now, without carin' for the sick. And Bernard's people never even once came near us when they was rich; but now they're poor, and have nowhere else to go, they can send their children here for their poor old mother to see to."

"Now, Josephine, I wouldn't run on so, if I was you. Bernard's girl ain't to blame; and besides, Bernard himself wasn't altogether to blame, and as he's dead, we should forget his faults."

Mr. Trent's voice trembled, as he delivered this, for him, rather long speech ; and his wife dropped into a chair without a word, and in her mind she lived over again the years of Bernard's boyhood and early manhood. He might not have been altogether to blame. Sometimes she had not been motherly to this boy, but fretful and fault-finding ; blaming him for everything, whether he deserved blame or not, quarreling with him in a very undignified, unmotherly manner, until at last the boy ran off, and had never returned. She had been extremely angry, and declared she'd never forgive him as long as he lived ; and her anger and resentment had prevented her from feeling sad for her boy ; and now he was dead, and could never, never come home again. Here her mother love utterly overcame her anger, and she shed tears at the tho't. And her heart softened as it did not soften the night before even on first hearing of the death of her only son. He could not come home again, but he had sent his child, an unconscious hostage, and she must not reject this silent overture for her forgiveness. And so, on next going into Leone's room, her heart was more tender and gentle than for years before.

" Are you sick this morning ? " she gently inquired, going up to the bedside, and gazing upon the fever-flushed face.

" O, no, I'm not sick ; I'm only 'the other

one;" Leone returned gravely, flashing her wide-open eyes upon her grandmother, in a serious stare of unrecognition.

"What on earth do you mean by being the other one?" Mrs. Trent asked, her natural curiosity coming uppermost again.

"Why, you see, there were two, and I'm the other one; but I'm not going to let any one know; for it would disgrace poor papa's name, and I *won't* have that done."

"Two what? I don't quite understand."

"Why, two girls, of course. One belonged to the French girl, Celeste, and the other to Margaret Barton Trent; and you see papa never knew whether I belonged to the French girl or to his lawful wife; and I will never tell Grandma Trent as long as I live."

"Why won't you tell her?" Grandma Trent asked, with the old hard lines drawing about her mouth again, and the old, bright glitter coming back to her still brilliant, fiery eyes.

"Because she don't like me, and I don't like her. I'm disappointed in papa's mother. She is not refined and lady-like, as I thought, and to please papa, I've got to live with her, you see."

"You're refined and lady-like, I should think, telling your grandmother that she isn't a lady, when according to your own story, you don't

know whether you've got a respectable name or not." And highly incensed with her granddaughter, poor Mrs. Trent flounced out of the room again, vowing never to forgive Leone, and to turn her out of doors, the minute she could walk.

"The idea of her saying that I ain't a lady;" she muttered aloud, as she went at the breakfast table with almost as much energy as Sam had displayed the night before; only Sam wasn't angry, and she was. And when father came in from his morning chores, she was ready with a long list of grievances; the shameful way in which that girl had treated her; the mean way that she had talked about her. "Have I got to stand it?"

"But you say the girl is sick;" Jonathan Trent cautiously replied; "sick and crazy, didn't you say?"

"Yes, or else she's makin' believe, but then she can't be makin' it, for she said she was "*the other one*," and Bernard had two girls, and one was by a French thing by the name of Celeste; but what's the matter, father?" for Mr. Trent had turned white and reeled like a drunken man into the nearest chair. "What on earth is the matter?" his wife cried, giving him an excited shake.

"It's—it's—all true, Josephine, but I hoped the girl didn't know it."

"What's true? What are you talkin' about? Are you crazy?"

"No; you know I went there about the time. They lived in Cincinnati then, but they moved to Glendale right away. But I met a fellow by the name of Harper, who told me the whole story, and swore eternal vengeance on Bernard and the legitimate girl. He said he had been fooled into marrying the French girl, but he had left her for ever. He seemed to be a respectable mechanic, though jest then, all broken up like, and disappointed, and I felt sorry for him."

"You knew all this, and never told me!" Mrs. Trent cried, as soon as she could sufficiently regain her composure to speak.

"I—I—thought it best not to say anything. You know you was always hard on the boy;" Mr. Trent replied, in a deprecating voice, as he wondered what they should do for the sick girl, who was Bernard's daughter and their own grandchild, whether she had any legal right to the name she bore, or not.

"Hadn't you better do something for her?" he asked at last.

"I don't know what to do;" Mrs. Trent cried, biting off her words as she usually did, unless company was present.

"Seems to me I'd try and do something."

Before his wife could reply, a knock upon the outer door summoned the farmer to open it, and

to utter a civil good morning to the stranger who stood there, bowing and twirling his cap in his hand, and who asked abruptly :

"Are you Mr. Jonathan Trent?"

"Yes, that's my name."

And the stranger, who was Bob Basset himself, had entered uninvited, and now said, still in an abrupt, jerky way :

"Is Miss Leone Trent here?"

"Yes;" Grandma hastened to reply in her softest voice, for might not this be some unknown friend of Leone's. "But the poor child is very sick this morning."

"Sick, is she? I wanted to see her. You see she was awful kind to me yesterday when I got hurt, and she done up my hand with her own handkerchief."

"How did you get hurt?" Grandpa asked, for the first time noticing the bandaged hand.

"I slipped when I went to board the train; but it'll be all right in a few days; and I'm going away. I just stopped here on business; and I'd like to thank her awful well, if she ain't too sick."

"I don't believe she'd know you. Still it won't do any hurt for you to just look in;" grandma hastened to say, her curiosity as usual getting the better of her judgment. And Bob Basset, equally as curious, followed Mrs. Trent to the door of the spare room, and looked in.

No, she did not know him; but she looked up with that grave, questioning air and eagerly asked:

"Do you know anything about it?"

"Anything about what, sis?" Bob Basset asked, in an unsteady voice, as his well hand dived into his pocket and brought out a gorgeous red handkerchief with which he occasionally gouged his eyes, while the sick girl talked.

"Why, 'the other one,' you know. Do you think I *am* 'the other one?'"

"Not a bit of it;" Bob exclaimed. "You ain't that other one, any more than I am. Don't let that worry you a mite."

"Then you know!" she cried eagerly. "Maybe you know where the other one is."

"Never mind about that other one, my dear. You just get well. That's all we'll ask of you. Don't let it worry you."

"Are you *sure* that I'm not the other one?"

"Yes, I *know* you're not. And now goodbye, for I must be going;" and Bob Basset turned abruptly and left the room, surreptitiously wiping his eyes again, and turning in the door-way to say:

"Have you sent for a doctor?"

"No, do you think she ought to have one?" grandma sighed.

"Have one? of course; she's mighty sick, I tell you, and maybe she'll die. I'm going right

through town and I'll send the best one in the burgh up here in a jiffy. Good mornin'!" And their curious visitor walked swiftly townward, saying to himself:

"Bob Basset, you are an old fool, sure enough; and I've always heerd say there was no fool like an old fool."

"Seems to me we might get along without a doctor," grandma grumbled. "It'll cost a sight."

"But maybe Leone'll die if she don't have one; and we can pay it somehow;" Grandpa asserted in a more hopeful tone.

"We're poor enough now, without any added expenses; and everything going to rack and ruin."

Grandpa sighed, and went out to dig his potatoes, which must be housed for winter use. He knew he was a shiftless, indifferent farmer; for he never wanted to be a farmer. But his hard, austere father would not allow him to be anything else. And perhaps the bitter memory of his boyhood had made him too lenient to Bernard and Bernard's serious faults.

CHAPTER VII.

TOM'S LETTER.

LEONE was sick, very sick, but she came slowly back to life and health again; thanks to the kind care and watching of the nurse that Dr. Lincoln sent.

And though Grandma Trent was horrified at the proposed nurse, and the expense it would incur, still the doctor was incorrigible, and the nurse flatly refused to leave the house for a moment, saying:

"The expense will be nothing to you. When the young lady gets well, she can pay me and take her time for it."

"It's that Mrs. Boyd that goes out nursing. She lives down quite at the other end of the town; and there's nobody in Lakeside that I'd trust with a case like this half as quick;" Dr. Lincoln said, when the nurse question had been settled and he prepared to take his leave.

"Who cares for Miss Boyd or anybody else?

It only makes work for me, all the time,—another one to wait on."

"But granny, I don't see how you could take care of Leone and do your work yourself. It would be harder than having Miss Boyd here."

"Oh sho! 'twouldn't neither. You an' father could help, and 'twould save a sight."

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Trent, but I couldn't help hearing you, and I want to assure you that I expect no waiting upon;" Mrs. Boyd herself said, as she came and stood in the door to deliver her little message, and then went back again to her patient.

But that was the first day of Leone's illness; now she is convalescent and sitting in her large easy chair, in the little parlor of the Trent farm house, and for the first time since that never-to-be-forgotten night, she looks about her with curious eyes.

Her organ has come; and thanks to Sam's kindly forethought, has been unboxed, and set up in a corner of the parlor, just as he had seen the piano at Mr. Hermon's. And Sam was not a little proud to think he had a cousin who owned an organ and could play upon it, and had already privately informed several of his acquaintances of the fact. And for the time being he was quite a hero among the boys at the box factory, who were very anxious to know if they could count upon Leone's support and

co-operation when the strike should occur, if it ever did. They had been talking of it for several weeks, and had already had two or three secret meetings, with Nathan Deane at their head, for the oppression of Barstow and Barstow was becoming intolerable.

"Boys, we can't live like this much longer;" Nathan Deane said. "When I see old Barstow's wife driving out with her coachman, I think of Mary, at home, as good a little woman as ever the Lord made, breaking her back over a wash-tub to help me support the family, and not even a one-horse wagon to ride in. And Mary's more of a lady any day than Mrs. Barstow. But that isn't all, boys; Mary's a Christian, and never finds fault with anybody or anything. And I believe that's the hardest to bear of all, to see her so patient and so meek. Boys, are we always going to endure this, and let them tread upon our wives, and daughters, and mothers, and sisters, because we are poorer than they? What would Barstow and Barstow be today, if they had not reaped immense profits from their slaves? for, I tell you, boys, we are but little better than the African slaves of a few short years ago. We are the white slaves of the North, being bought and sold every day of our lives, for the profit of our owners. If it were not for Mary and the children, I would throw down the gauntlet tomorrow, and refuse

to do another hour's work for Barstow and Barstow, or any other accursed firm, until wages were regulated on a basis of equality. I would become a tramp and stir up sedition from town to town. But Mary and the children keep me here, and keep me within the bounds of humanity; and, boys, though I'm not a Christian, nor even a good man, yet I do feel like thanking God that he has given me Mary and the children to keep me where I ought to be."

And amid a deafening shout of applause, and three cheers for Nathan Deane's wife and daughters, we reverently say, "Thank God for giving many a poor, hard-working, down-trodden man, Mary and the children to guard him against wrong.

That was last night, and this morning, Sam had ventured to ask his cousin if she would be willing to have Mary Deane call on her, as her husband said she had expressed a desire to make Miss Trent's acquaintance.

"She's a firstrate woman, if she does do washing and sewing and ironing and mopping and sweeping, I guess, to help support the family. She's Nathan Deane's wife, and he's one of our boss hands at Barstow's."

And Leone, seeing Sam's eager face, and remembering how good he had been to her during her illness, and realizing just how anxious he was to present his friends, said:

"Yes, Mary Deane may come, as soon as Mrs. Boyd thinks best;" and then she fell to wondering what her Glendale friends would say because she was going to receive a wash-woman on terms of equality. But it mattered little what they thought now, since there was but little probability of their ever meeting again.

"She can come anytime now, tomorrow if she wants to;" Mrs. Boyd answered, as she turned for a moment from the article over which she was bending, a finely embroidered fabric, fit for a princess.

"I beg your pardon, Mrs. Boyd," Leone exclaimed suddenly, "but you do so much of that fine embroidery, don't it hurt your eyes?"

"No," the nurse replied, without raising her head, "I do not think it does."

Leone did not inquire what she was going to do with it, but Mrs. Boyd, folding up the robe, said quietly, as though answering such a question:

"This is to be Leslie's graduating dress. She will graduate next June."

"Oh! and who is Leslie? You see I am too curious to be polite. Is she your daughter?"

"Ye-e-s, Leslie is my daughter. I am going to town now, on an errand for myself, but shall return soon;" Mrs. Boyd continued, in her cool, formal manner.

"Mrs. Boyd!" Leone called suddenly, "will

you please go to the pocket of my traveling dress and bring me the letter you will find there? Tom gave it to me the morning he left me at the depot, but I have never read it."

Mrs Boyd did as directed and placed the letter in Leone's hand, and though she lingered upon one pretext and another, curiously watching her patient, yet Leone didn't venture to open her letter until her nurse had gone. And when she did open it, there was a mist of tears before her eyes, for poor Tom's faithfulness; and the home scenes were vividly before her now. She read:

Dear Miss Leone:—

You must forgive me for daring to write to you at all, but I can't let you go without saying these last words. I ain't no scholar, as you know, and not used to letter-writin' neither; but it jest breaks my heart to think of your goin' away without any hope in a hereafter, or any trust in your Heavenly Father. And, O, dear Miss, I know there is a God, and that he takes care of everybody that wants him to; and he'll take care of you too, if you'll only ask him. I shall pray every day for you, Miss Leone, that the good Father will make you a Christian; and there's lots of promises in his word that's comfortin' to a broken heart; and for poor Tom's sake, won't you jest take the Bible, and read the fourteenth chapter of St. John, and read it every day till you want to read something else; and be sure I'll pray for you always. And if you could hear Mr. Thornton preach about these things, you'd understand it all, jest as I did when I heard him.

Yours to command forever and ever,

TOM TIPTON.

Forgive me for daring to write to you so, but I want you to be a Christian, Miss Leone. T. T."

With a curious sensation in her heart, Leone

read this letter, once, twice, thrice, while the tears dropped fast upon honest Tom's epistolary effort.

"I believe Tom is more than half right," she thought, "for I always felt that there must be another life, and a great over-ruling power which is love and truth."

And getting her little Bible from among her books, which Sam had also opened up, and left where she could see them, when she returned to life and consciousness, she turned the leaves quickly, and finding the fourteenth chapter of St. John, began to read. But the very first verse made her pause and sigh. Did she believe in God? If she did not believe in him, she could not believe in the Lord's Christ. Her father did not believe; he laughed and said it was all nonsense. But her mother believed She used to bow down and pray, and had taught her to say, "Our Father."

"I will believe!" she said aloud. "I want to believe; Lord help me to believe!"

And then she read carefully on and on, and the words, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it," laid firm hold upon her mind, and lodged deep in her heart.

"Oh, Lord!" she prayed, "I have never come to thee before. I have been stubborn and wayward, and feeble indeed; but in the name of

Jesus, do thou forgive my sins, and give me a knowledge of the truth."

And then the words of Tom's letter came to mind:

"If you could hear Mr. Thornton, you would understand just as I do."

But it was too late now. She would not hear Earle Thornton in the old days when she could; and now she could not hear him when she would. There was no one to explain these difficult problems to her, no one to tell her the truth. She must trust God and pray to have it revealed to her in his own way. And mentally hoping God would bless Tom for daring to write to her, she folded the letter, and put it away.



CHAPTER VIII.

LESLIE.

WHEN Mrs. Boyd returned, Leone was still pondering over Tom's letter and the new train of thought it had suggested.

"I'm afraid you are sitting up too long;" she said, in her usual, low, quiet voice.

"No, I think not, Mrs. Boyd. I've been reading the letter that Tom gave me, and it has done me a world of good."

And then a moment later:

"Mrs. Boyd, I saw you kneel down last night before you went to sleep. Do you always do that?"

"Yes, always, now;" in the same low, quiet voice, without raising her eyes, which gave one an idea of abject humility in this woman or else of intense hypocrisy.

"Now! then you didn't always?"

"I am sorry to say that I did not."

"Why not? if I may inquire."

"Because I have been a great sinner, and

great sinners are very ignorant about God."

Leone was silent, struck dumb by those last words. Great sinners ignorant about God! Then she must be a sinner, for surely she was very ignorant, and hitherto had thought but very little of God and the Saviour of man. At last she asked half banteringly, half earnestly:

"Do you think I'm a sinner?"

"If you do not believe and love the Lord, you must be a sinner."

"But what if I *can't* believe?"

"Then God help you to believe."

Mrs. Boyd's reserve was melting away. She was becoming eloquent and earnest. She continued without giving Leone opportunity for further question:

"God will help every human soul that comes to him with an humble and contrite heart. He always hears the cry of the suffering and the sorrowful, and he will never turn anyone away hungry or thirsty. Oh, Miss Leone, if you could only feel and be assured that he is waiting to receive you!"

"But I've been so rebellious and so bitter. It doesn't seem as though he could receive me;" Leone said, in a low, constrained voice, "almost persuaded" and yet holding back until "some other day."

"If he received *me*, the chief of sinners, I am sure he will receive *you*;" was the reply.

Leone flashed her dark, starry eyes upon her nurse with a curious expression, and exclaimed:

"Why are you the chief of sinners?"

A wave of color swept over the usually pale face of the nurse, but in a steady undertone she replied:

"Because I have been a very great sinner,—a very great sinner! But Christ found me and saved me. He is always seeking for the lost, you know; and I was lost, *lost*, LOST."

"One would think you had done something dreadful, and I don't believe it. You are too gentle and kind ever to have been very bad."

"Thank you for your kind words; I shall never forget them. But I *have* been very bad."

"One would think you had broken nearly all the commandments."

Again that hot wave of color crept into Mrs. Boyd's pale face, and she was relieved when Grandma Trent called "Supper!" in her quick, sharp voice; and Sam came in with a great show of ceremony, to wheel Leone's chair out to the dining-table for the first time.

"Are you sure you can stand it?" he asked half bashfully.

"O yes, I have been waited on long enough. I must begin to get out and help grandma."

"Not till you're well, though, shall she granny?"

"Shall she what?" Mrs. Trent answered curtly, as she put the last dish upon the table, and dropped into her place, while Sam arranged Leone's chair, and then sat down replying:

"Why, help you! She says she is going to help you soon."

"Well there's enough to do, mercy knows, and I shall be glad to rest. Take hold now, and help yourselves. Father never waits on the table."

And Leone was aware of a curious feeling in her heart, as she saw that grandfather's head was not bowed in gratitude to God, any more than her own father's had ever been; but yet grandpa was not an atheist. Such unbelief had no lodgement in his brain, although he openly avowed it to be his belief that "Bob Ingersoll was the smartest man in the United States."

"What were you two talkin' about, so busy?" Grandma inquired, as she finished pouring the tea.

Leone turned beseechingly to her quiet nurse, and the latter replied gravely:

"We were talking of the goodness of God."

"Humph! I don't believe much in such cant," Mrs. Trent said in her most positive and aggressive manner.

"You surely believe in a hereafter?"

"May be I do, but still I don't see anything to make me. It seems to me that this life is

all there is, and what we don't git here we never will git."

Leone sighed. No wonder her father had lived the life he lived and taught her such a doctrine as this, if his own mother had instilled these ideas into his very babyhood.

"And yet," Mrs. Boyd observed, "everything in nature shows us that there is no real death."

"O Sho! everything in nature dies. Simmons' folks are Spiritualists, and if there is any hereafter, they are about as near right as anybody."

"Still I'm afraid they're not right."

"Simmons sees'em, and they influence him, and tell him what to do;" Sam argued, with a humorous twinkle in his eyes, at the words, "They tell him what to do."

Leone's eyes grew wide and dark, as was common with her when excited or deeply interested.

"You don't mean," she said, "that the dead return and tell the living what to do!"

"That's what Simmons' folks believe, and old Mr. Simmons tells 'em how to run the farm since he died."

"How does he tell them?"

"Through the old lady. She's the medium."

"I wish I knew;" Leone began excitedly; but Mrs. Boyd interrupted her with the words:

"Don't seek anything of the kind Miss Leone. Remember what the Bible says about it."

"But I know nothing about the Bible. I never read a dozen chapters in my life."

"We are commanded to have nothing to do with familiar spirits."

"That shows that there are such things, then;" Leone exclaimed triumphantly, naturally inclining towards this ism, which has wrecked more than one life, and ruined more than one home. And yet it has more than once been productive of good, inasmuch as it has set the thoughtless to thinking and investigating, and proving by the Bible the source from which it comes; thereby proving, that the Great Ruler of the Universe can bring good out of evil.

"Yes, it proves that, but see how Saul was punished by seeking information from the woman of Endor, as to how the battle would go upon the morrow."

"But that is nothing but a story, you know,—an old Jewish story. Papa said so."

Mrs. Boyd's lips quivered with suppressed emotion, as her mind recalled the past and the sorrowful picture she saw there, made her answer bravely:

"Miss Leone, I beg your pardon for daring to say what I now tell you. But it was just such teaching as that which caused me to wander in darkness and to become a sinner; and if Jesus

had not found me, I dare not think what I should have been today. Nothing but sorrow and misery come from the teaching of infidelity."

"O Sho!" said Mrs. Trent. "Anybody'd think we were all the awfullest set that ever was. I guess we are as respectable as some other folks."

"I beg your pardon;" Mrs. Boyd hastened to say. "I did not mean anything personal."

"I've always heard that religion and politics never should be discussed in company;" Sam observed, as he tipped back in his chair, well satisfied with his supper and totally oblivious of the fact that his attitude was not gentlemanly. On the contrary, he felt that it was highly decorous and commendable, as it was the favorite attitude of Fred Barstow; and Fred was rich and should know what belonged to good manners.

Just then a timid rap sounded on the outer door, and Mrs. Trent hastened to open it.

"Is Mrs. Boyd here?" a sweet, low voice said; and Mrs. Boyd turned suddenly, and arose quickly from her chair, clinging to it for support, while a pallor like death overspread her face, as her eyes fell upon her visitor. And yet there was nothing formidable nor terrible about this visitor. Only a very pretty, blue-eyed, fine

haired girl, about Leone's age, who advanced hastily with the words:

"I want to see you a moment, I've something to tell you."

"Leslie!" Mrs. Boyd gasped, coming slowly back to herself. "Yes, perhaps Mrs. Trent will allow us to go into the parlor a moment."

"Why, yis, go in;" Mrs. Trent assented, not very graciously, it must be confessed, for her curiosity was aroused, and she did want to know what brought Leslie there, and why her mother had met her so strangely.

"What is the matter, Leslie," were Mrs. Boyd's first words as soon as they were alone.

"This letter mother. It has troubled me a good deal, and I thought it best to bring it to you."

Mrs. Boyd took the letter and read mechanically, but with a pallid face and troubled eyes:

"MISS LESLIE BOYD:—

You must leave school at once. You are not to graduate; and when your mother sees this writing, she will know the reason why."

That was all. There was nothing by which to identify the writer unless it was the writing.

"What shall I do, mother?" were Leslie's piteous words.

"You must leave school."

"And not graduate?"

"Yes."

"Will you tell me why?"

"God help me, no, I must not."

"Are you in somebody's power, mother?" Leslie demanded, in a quick, imperious voice, that plainly told how little her will had ever been curbed or restrained.

"You forget that you have no right to ask;" was the proud, but humbly-given, reply.

"I don't see why, mother. It seems to me that anything that concerns you should concern me. But if you won't tell me, you won't, I suppose. Will you introduce me to your pretty patient?"

There was a perceptible quiver about the nurse's lips, as she turned away saying:

"I had rather not, Leslie."

"Why? I wonder. Am I not as good as she? Our house is better than this, anyway;" Leslie exclaimed, pouting like the spoiled child that she was.

Mrs. Boyd shuddered, as though with a chill, at the first part of Leslie's last sentence, but answered still in that quiet, sadly-reserved way:

"You are very thoughtless, Leslie, for a girl of your age. It is not necessary for you to become acquainted with Miss —— Trent. Your paths lie in separate directions; and besides she might not wish to become acquainted with her nurse's daughter."

"I don't believe she's proud, mother;—not in

that way. She don't appear so. But I won't insist. How much longer are you going to remain here?"

"Only a day or two. I shall go as soon as she is well enough to wait upon herself. Then we will decide upon your future."

"I have already decided that, you know."

"Yes, but without your diploma, you cannot easily get a situation as teacher. Competition will be too great, and there will be too many graduates from whom to select."

"Still I don't see, mother—;" Leslie began, and then stopped, pouting prettily and childishly; and then continued thoughtlessly: "But I suppose I'd better go now, before I make you angry again."

Mrs. Boyd sighed, and stood with clasped hands, while Leslie went out, saying lightly: "Goodbye."

At the kitchen door, she paused a moment half-irresolutely, and looked shyly towards Leone.

"Must you go so soon?" Leone said pleasantly. "I hoped to make your acquaintance."

"O, did you?" Leslie answered, drawing nearer, and laying her gloved hand half-timidly upon the invalid. "I asked mother to introduce me, and she wouldn't."

"Wouldn't!" exclaimed Leone in surprise; stopping mutely with the sudden sharp memory

of her possible disgrace. Perhaps her nurse knew, and did not choose to let her daughter associate with one over whose name hung a cloud. And from that moment, and for years after, Leone Trent lived under a shadow, and felt often and often as though people had heard, and knew all about it. It made her reserved, and cold, and proud, and distant. But Leslie without noticing what she had done continued:

"I would like to get acquainted with you, for I like you better than any one else I ever saw;—I mean when I first met them, you know.'

"Certainly, but if your mother does not approve, we must not make any acquaintance;' Leone replied, with an unusual constraint in voice and manner.

"Oh! mother doesn't care; only she says you wouldn't want to know your nurse's daughter."

"I am sorry that Mrs. Boyd has so poor an opinion of me."

"Well, never mind; we're acquainted now, and mother won't care; but I really must go before it gets later. Goodbye."

And, nodding brightly, Leslie disappeared, and walked rapidly towards the town. A quarter of a mile beyond the Trent farm, sitting on a broken fence, was a handsome, stylish, young man, switching the dead autumn leaves about with his light, gold-headed cane, or beating an impatient tattoo upon the chestnut rails. He

sprang down, however, and advanced to meet Leslie with a winning smile, and the words:

"You have been gone a long time, *Ma belle.*"

Leslie raised her eyebrows with a coquettish smile, and the half-indifferent remark:

"I lost my heart at the old Trent farm."

"To the redoubtable Sam, I suppose;" was answered, in the same careless tone, tinged with a coloring of contempt, that plainly showed in what estimation the honest young laborer was held by this scion of capital.

"For once, I'll be honest, and tell you it was not to poor Sam, but to Sam's cousin."

"And who is he? where did he come from?" young Fred Barstow asked quickly and jealously.

"Who, Sam's cousin?" she answered, with an innocent uplifting of the childish blue eyes. "Oh, I believe the name is Trent."

"You are a heartless coquette, Leslie, and you know it;" Mr. Barstow asserted, with an aggrieved air, as he watched Leslie's sweet, flushed face, and drooping eyes;—the heightened color on her dimpled cheeks, and the suspicious glimmer of a smile about her rosebud mouth.

"Please, Fred, don't scold; but I really couldn't help falling in love with Sam's cousin."

"Confound Sam's cousin!"

"If you should see her, you wouldn't say that;" Leslie continued demurely.

"Her! whom do you mean?"

"Why, Marston's cousin, of course. You see I never said it was a young gentleman; but you jealously leaped to that conclusion. Oh, Fred! I'm afraid, you've got a sorry temper."

Fred Barstow bit his lip, and was obliged to own himself worsted. He looked at Leslie with a strange gleam in his eyes,—a look that boded no good to the rashly trusting girl; but he answered indifferently:

"So Sam's cousin is a lady, and you fell in love with her?"

"Yes; she has been very ill; and mother is her nurse. And she isn't a bit like those Trents, but a real lady."

Fred changed the topic of conversation, as though exceedingly bored by Sam's cousin; but the next day, he began so industriously cultivating the acquaintance of the young mechanic whom he had heretofore so unmercifully snubbed, that Sam, being unusually sagacious, mentally concluded that old Barstow's son had an axe to grind, but Sam Marston should be the last one to turn the grindstone.

In the meantime Fred Barstow had possessed himself of Leslie's little gloved hand, and was making his usual lover-like advances, when the rumbling of wheels caused him to drop her hand

and move away, a few paces, as the vehicle came in sight and vanished again.

"Why do you always act afraid of being seen with me, Fred?" said Leslie quietly but imperiously.

"For your own sake, love. You know our positions are vastly different, and people would talk. For that reason, I must not go into town with you, but say goodbye here. But I shall call around this evening, be sure."

And gallantly raising his hat, Fred Barstow hurried away in an opposite direction, in time to avoid another carriage, and Leslie turned down a cross street, or lane, to her home.



CHAPTER IX.

ALAS FOR LESLIE!

AN intimacy sprang up between Leone and Leslie that was strong and quite lasting. Leone, being stronger, steadier, and loftier in mind, felt a protecting love for this weak, vacillating, lovable girl, who came to her with all her little secrets and grievances,—even her love for Fred Barstow, "who is so very much above me, you know;" she said.

"I don't know anything of the kind;" Leone stoutly asserted. "I believe in the equallty of all mankind; and because Fred Barstow has more money than you, it certainly doesn't follow that he is any better. It is neither money nor position that makes the lady or the gentleman; but it is that innate refinement, and sweetness of character that springs from the depths of a thoroughly good, true heart. And when a man or woman is bound up in self; wrapped around and around with the garments of selfishness; refinement, gentility and good breed-

ing are entirely lacking. There may be a counterfeit semblance of the true coin there, but that is all."

"Why, Leone, Leone! what a public speaker you would make!" Leslie exclaimed, clapping her hands, and laughing gayly. But in a more serious tone, she continued: "Earle Thornton ought to hear you; that is the way he talks."

Leone turned suddenly, looking at Leslie with a puzzled expression. Earle Thornton! the name and the memory gave her a curious kind of a shock, that she had never experienced before, that she did not even understand. Her mind went back over those few short months, to the day when she stood by her father's grave, and Earle Thornton had so gently led her away.

"Do you know Mr. Thornton?" she asked in a constrained voice.

"Yes. He comes to Lakeside sometimes, to preach, and there is always a crowd to hear him. It was Earle Thornton that converted mamma you know."

"No, I did not know."

"O, but it was; and do you know,—I hope it isn't wrong to tell of it. It can't be to you; but there is such a difference in mother now. She used to be cross, and fault-finding, and scolding; and used to play cards, and say bad things, which she never says or does now. And she used to curse somebody by the name of

Henry, who was the cause of all her trouble, she said. But now she prays God to forgive her for trying to deceive Henry."

"Leslie, Leslie, Leslie! Don't! You should not run on so, and to me;" Leone replied, feeling a thrill of horror at Leslie's words, which had roused such an unpleasant memory in her past, which was yet vague, uncertain and disgraceful.

"I know I talk too much; mother says I do. But I don't want you to think mother isn't what she ought to be; for she is. She's real good now; only she won't tell me who it is that has power to make us miserable, and prohibit my graduating?"

"Has anyone?" Leone thoughtlessly queried.

"Yes; I got a letter from him telling me to leave school, that day I first came here, you know. But, O, about Mr. Thornton; he believes that God loves everybody, and is, O, so sorry when we do wrong, and mother cried so when she heard him preach the first day he was here, that I thought she never would stop. And then she was baptized before he went home."

"Baptized!" Leone repeated curiously; for as yet her understanding of the word of God was limited, indeed.

"Yes, and you know there is but one baptism;" Leslie continued, growing earnest and eloquent. "It's to go *down into the water* as

Christ did and be *immersed.* That's what Mr. Thornton says, and I believe it;" with a positive little nod of her fair head, that was quite charming, and Leone did not wonder that poor Sam's heart was hopelessly entangled with this bright little vision of womanhood. She said:

"Have you been baptized, Leslie?"

"No-o;" Leslie answered, dropping her head in half shame.

"And yet, you believe?"

"Ye-es."

"You believe, but do not obey. Leslie, I cannot understand any such half-hearted measure as that. If I was positive that the Bible was the Word of God; that Jesus came to seek and save the lost; I should obey. I cannot understand why you do not."

Nor could she. She was too earnest and whole-souled to falter a moment, in love or duty. She belonged to the sheep, and yet she was out of the fold.

"I'm going to be baptized; sometime;" Leslie hastened to say; "but, you see, Fred laughs at me, and—and—I don't like to be laughed at."

"All of which illustrates more and more plainly that Fred is not a gentleman;" Leone returned with that severity which righteous indignation was apt to bring to her tone. "Leslie, I beg of you to give up Fred Barstow."

"Leone! I believe you want him yourself,

or you wouldn't talk like that;" Leslie retorted, in her quick, impetuous way; her sudden flashes of temper reminding one of heat lightning.

"Certainly not;" Leone returned a trifle haughtily; "but if he laughs at your religious views now, what will he do when you are his wife?"

Poor Leslie colored and hung her head, as she remembered that in all Fred's wooing, he had never once hinted at the bare possibility of her ever becoming his wife.

"But then," she thought, "he surely will sometime, or why does he keep seeking me?"

Alas! poor Leslie! poor innocent child! Going blindly on to your fate, without ever stopping to think of the horrible gulf that yawns at your feet, ready to swallow you up in its rushing, roaring waters, unless the angel of the Lord comes to draw you back!

This is a specimen of the many conversations between Leslie and Leone; and Leone was no nearer convincing her erratic friend than before. Leslie knew that she was right, and Fred was right, only Leone was prudish, old-maidish, and meddlesome, and she gradually grew cool towards her new-found friend, and shunned her altogether; owing, it must be confessed, to Fred's interference; for Leslie's was one of those sweet, shallow natures, so easily led; weak and confiding, where confidence would

have been much better withheld. It was perfectly natural for her to carry everything to Fred, and he, utterly crafty and unprincipled, advised her in a way best suited to bring about his own ends, which never went beyond his own advancement, pleasure or desire. And so Leslie drifted on to her fate.

"I can't understand why you don't finish your school course, Leslie;" Fred said one evening, as he sat with her in the pretty, little front parlor, where he spent nearly all his evenings now. And for answer, the innocent, loving, confiding girl put that fatal letter into the eager hands of her unprincipled lover, never dreaming that she might as well have taken her life with her own hand, as to put her honor into the hands of Fred Barstow.

Reader mine, do not mistake my meaning. I believe in confidence; and confiding natures are always sweetest and most lovable. But, O, girls! be sure your lover is worthy of your confidence, before you give him one iota of that faith and trust which is so dear to every honorable man, and which every man of honor sacredly guards.

Already, Fred Barstow had whispered to his most intimate associates, that pretty little Leslie Boyd was like a skein of silk, which he could wind around his little finger. How long does it take for such unkind insinuations to

float abroad on the waves of society, until it becomes an arrow with a poisoned tip, that buries itself at last in the quivering, shuddering, bleeding heart of its innocent, though perhaps imprudent victim? From the moment that Fred Barstow read that note, he suspected Leslie's mother of occupying a false position and of being in some man's power, and he treated Leslie accordingly. This suspicion became absolute knowledge, after reading another note, addressed in the same hand to Leslie, and which the girl was again imprudent enough to show her lover; while her eyes were swimming in tears of terror and shame.

"*Miss Leslie:*—

Tell your mother to call herself and you by your right names, or I shall publish that little transaction of ours to the world."

"What does it mean, Fred? what *does* it mean?" Leslie cried in fear and horror, as she clung to Fred in her sore perplexity.

"It means that something is wrong, and your mother is not what she seems;" was the shrewd, but unfeeling response, as Fred added one more item to his mental memoranda.

"Not what she seems!" The words were seething in Leslie's brain, and a feeling of distrust sprang into life for her mother,—especially after that mother admitted that she was in this mysterious letter-writer's power, and must

obey the mandate of his will, for fear of more dreadful consequences, should she refuse to obey. And Leslie, for the first time in weeks, flew to Leone for help and comfort.

"You are always so strong and so brave," she said, "and I feel like defying everything when I am with you. Oh, Leone! it seems as though some terrible fate hung over me, and I am being persecuted to the very death."

But Leone, for once, was unable to comfort the frightened girl. A great rush of memory was flooding her own soul, a sudden horror and pain sweeping down upon her. She turned away with the confused words:

"Don't, Leslie, don't! I know not what to say. I cannot even think. I must be alone. But I will come and see you tomorrow."

And Leslie turned away, to meet Fred, who was to take her away from the Trent farm, on a sleighing expedition.



CHAPTER X.

LEONE'S PRAYER.

FOR a moment after Leslie's departure, Leone stood in troubled irresolution. She would go and see Mrs. Boyd. She wanted to pay her for nursing her through her illness, anyway; and as she had just received her quarterly income from Walter Carrington, she would go at once. Perhaps she would then know better what to say to Leslie. She hastily made her preparations for the street, and going through the kitchen, said:

"I am going out a little while, but shall return in time to get tea."

"Where on earth are you going to?" Grandmother Trent asked, looking up from the columns of the illustrated paper which held many attractions for her. And well she might ask, for Leone rarely went out, but had cheerfully performed everything required of her, since her illness, and Mrs. Trent wondered how she ever kept house without Leone.

Grandfather and Sam were not slow to see the marked improvement; and the first time Leone tidied up the kitchen, Sam, on his return from the shop, exclaimed:

"What has happened to the old shanty?"

"O, Leone has been trying to learn me how to keep house!" was the testy reply. "I s'pose she thinks I don't know how to do anything."

"I should think you'd be glad, granny."

"O, it's all right, I s'pose."

The truth was, it was Mrs. Trent's nature to find fault. And if she were well pleased with anything, she would still have to find fault about it.

And so Leone did not stop to reply to her grandmother's question further than:

"I may call upon Mrs. Deane. You know I have never returned her calls." And then she mused, "Upon the whole, I will go there first; somehow I dread to meet Leslie's mother today."

A strange oppressive feeling was upon her; and yet she felt hurried on and on, without any power to resist this impelling force, but resolutely turned down the street where Sam had directed her to go to Nathan Deane's.

Mrs Deane was at home and very glad to see her visitor, "More particularly," she said, "because I've just been reading a book that I want you to read."

"What is it?" Leone asked, more to keep up

the conversation than because she was interested; for her mind was greatly troubled over Leslie, and she could not forget the import of the letter that had disturbed them both.

"It's 'THE GOSPEL IN TYPE AND PROPHECY,' and Nathan says it makes things so plain to him that he is almost persuaded to be a Christian. Will you read it?"

"O yes, certainly!" was the half-reluctant reply, for Leone had been slowly but surely coming down to the very depths of the Bible truths, and as she had never read anything that agreed with her own peculiar thoughts and views, she dreaded taking up this new book, which would of course jar upon the beautiful theories she was led to weave into a web suggestive of God's unending love for man.

She took the book, and read on the title page, "THE DAY DAWN."*

"That is certainly suggestive;" she said. "I hope it is satisfactory."

"I'm sure you will find that it is. And I believe the Spirit of the Lord guided the Author of DAY DAWN to write and give to the world a work that must be of inestimable value to anyone who is in any doubt regarding the divine truths of God's Word. Nathan was very much interested in it. And he is so terribly in earnest in everything that he undertakes, that I

* See notice at end of this book.

am praying constantly that God will convert him to the true faith."

"Must you go?" she continued soon after, as her visitor arose to take her departure.

"Yes, I must go, as I wish to call on my old nurse before I return."

"O, Mrs. Boyd! yes, she's a good Christian woman. Brother Thornton was the means of her conversion. He preaches nearly the same doctrine as the DAY DAWN advocates. You ought to hear Brother Thornton."

"I should be glad to hear him;" Leone replied, as her mind went back again to the new-made grave on the hillside, and to the young minister of whom she knew so little, but who had been so kind, and always called her Leone, when other gentlemen addressed her as Miss Trent; "but it isn't likely that I ever shall."

"Nothing is more likely, for he comes here occasionally;" was Mrs. Deane's reply.

And Leone went on her way with the half-formed thought in her mind: If Earle Thornton should come to Lakeside before the May flowers bloomed upon the hills and in the dales, she would take it as an omen that there was a God of light, and love, and truth, such as she longed to think he was. And so strong a hold had this idea taken upon her mind, that before she slept that night, she knelt down and prayed:

"O God! if these things are true, and I have been led

by thy divine love and grace thus far, and Jesus did really come to save the souls of men; and if it is in accordance with thy divine will that I should be baptized, even as Christ was, wilt thou send Earl Thornton to me before the month of May comes again. In the name of Jesus, I ask it, Lord!—Amen."

It was the struggling cry of a tortured soul, and it reached the throne of grace,—as what cry for help ever fails to reach the ears of a loving and tender Father?

Leone had taken the Bible for her standard, and she had learned to pray just as Christ told us to pray. And that one sentence,—"If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it," had taken such hold on her mind that she felt the truth and force of the words; and if it was God's will, whatever she asked would be granted.

She had also learned the importance of yielding our will to God's. That we must feel in the depths of the heart, that we want God's will to be done. It is not enough to say, "Thy will be done," but we must feel it and mean it. And it seemed now to Leone, that she had always loved and trusted God; that away down in the inner depths of her heart, she had known the Saviour of men; that it was only devotion to her father, and his way of thinking, that had for a time blinded her.

"O papa! poor papa!" she said, "I'm afraid that you were wrong in this, as in so many oth-

er things; but even if you were, I can leave you in God's loving hands."

O, sad and sorrowful thought! when a child must acknowledge, even to his own heart, that a parent was wrong in many things. O, fathers and mothers! bear this in mind, and if you are weak, and wrong in many things, never let your child have to reflect that you started him wrong, or tried to set him against the religion of Jesus, the Lord's Christ. Even if you do not believe, never seek to infuse your thoughts into the mind of your boy or your girl.

And yet, joyful thought! we can leave the most erring one in the hands of a loving Father! Leone had been brought to this condition of mind by bitter humiliation and suffering. But what she endured after she left Mary Deane, and before she knelt in prayer that night, we will record in another chapter.

In the meantime, the box-makers at Barstow and Barstow's were growing more and more uneasy under the yoke they were forced to wear, and the meetings more frequent and threatening.

"Something must be done, and at once;" Nathan Deane observed. "Boys, do you know what Fred Barstow is doing? He is ingratiating himself into our homes; and for what purpose? Do you think he cares for us, the poor shop hands, who live from hand-to mouth? Do

you think he would come into our homes if we did not have pretty daughters and sisters to smile upon him? Boys, I had rather my girls would die tonight, than live to be old enough for such men as Fred Barstow to look upon. The poor girl does not live in this town whom Fred Barstow would marry; and yet there are not many poor girls, who are pretty and engaging, but have at some time or other been acquainted with him, and received his attentions, or those of Mark Stanley, George Grayson, and the like, and think it an honor, perhaps; but I had rather bury Maude and Grace, than have them live to know such men. Poor girls are too often led to ruin by the attentions of such profligates."

Sam, thinking bitterly of poor Leslie, repeated these words as nearly as he could to Leone; but her heart was already too sore and heavy to feel, that night, more than an added weight of woe.



CHAPTER XI.

A SAD STORY.

WHEN Leone left Mrs. Deane's, in her rapid, easy gait, she hastened on to Mrs. Boyd's cottage. In the streets she was obliged to traverse, she passed several second-rate, or third-rate, saloons. And as the day was warm and bright for the season, many of the habitues of these places were lounging about the doorways, and street-corners, puffing clouds of tobacco-smoke into the faces of the pedestrians, and commenting, in subdued tones upon the appearance of every lady whom business, unfortunately, took in that direction.

These were men, the noblest of God's creation, now debased by the influence of intoxicating liquor; men who, in their better moments, would have scorned to cast a disrespectful look upon a lady; and yet who were ready to drown their manhood, every day and hour, in that which debases and degrades.

A strong, realizing sense of this came home to

Leone,—something that she had never felt before,—a wish, amounting to a prayer, that something might be done for these men, to remove them from temptation.

"But then, what?" she thought. "Surely nothing but the grace of God can rescue or save anyone who has become a slave to appetite."

And thus thinking, she found herself at the door of Mrs. Boyd's cottage. She paused a moment in dread and painful irresolution. Never before had she so dreaded to enter anyone's house. Never before had she endured such a feeling of wretchedness. It was as if the solid earth were slipping from under her feet, and there was nothing but chaos around and above. But before she went home again, she should know what she came to learn.

She rapped lightly with her gloved hand, and a moment later, the door was opened by Mrs. Boyd herself, whose swollen eyes testified, all too plainly, that she had been weeping, miserably and alone. An expression, whether of fear or dislike, of joy or pleasure, Leone could not determine, passed over her face, as she opened the door wider and said:

"Good afternoon, Miss Trent. I am glad to see you, but sorry that Leslie is not at home. Will you come in?" she said, in a tone which seemed to Leone much as if she had added: "Of course you will not, seeing that Leslie is

away;" and which her visitor read aright, but stepping in, she replied:

"If you please, as I knew that Leslie was away, and my visit is to you."

Mrs. Boyd's face turned pale as she mechanically moved an easy chair forward for her visitor, and sinking into another, observed faintly, that it was a very pleasant day;—that old, stilted, stereotyped expression, used when people have absolutely nothing to say.

"Beautiful!" Leone returned, with another stereotyped expression; but she had never been so embarrassed in her life before, and inwardly wondered what people would do, sometimes, if they could'nt talk about the weather. But her self-command was at all times quite superb, and, rallying instantly, she faced Mrs. Boyd with the words:

"I received my quarterly allowance yesterday, Mrs. Boyd, and would like to pay you for taking care of me when I was sick."

Mrs. Boyd colored faintly, and came gradually back to herself, and said in a low voice:

"You owe me nothing."

"Surely you told Grandmother Trent that I should pay you for your service;" Leone returned, a trifle coldly; her old haughty manner coming back, unconsciously, as she watched this woman's evident distress of mind and her too palpable effort to cover it.

"But I had rather you would not, much rather."

"Still you must allow me to do as I please. Here is the money. I hope you will not refuse to take it."

And Mrs. Boyd, absolutely helpless under this stronger will, mechanically took the roll of bills and put them in her pocket with a faint murmur of thanks.

Again came another dreadful silence, broken at last by Leone:

"Madame!" she faintly began, "I have called to ask you something about—about—about—Leslie!"

The nurse started uneasily, clasping and unclasping her hands, and at last let them drop idly in her lap, with an expression and accent that Leone had never before heard from Mrs. Boyd: "*Qui Vous l'a dit?*"

Simple enough, perhaps, and nothing startling in that. And although Leone had half-expected it, yet it came with stunning and awful force. It was terribly startling and not at all simple.

She cowered back in her chair, as though she had been struck by the slim, dark hand of the woman opposite, and covering her face with her hands, groaned aloud. The few past months were lived over in a moment of time; and shivering, shrinking, and shaking, Leone's hands

dropped away from her shamed and stricken face.

"No one has told me;" she answered, in a low voice. "No one need tell me now. You have betrayed yourself by your native tongue, Madame."

"Don't!" cried the French woman, excitedly, forgetting her long assumed English, and in her excitement dropping back into her voluble French: "Mees Leone, don't!"

"Why?" imperiously.

"*Mon Dieu!* how you torture! I don't know whether you are Leslie or Leone! but O, *Grand Ceil!* I love you better than I do '*the other one.*'"

"Then you are *Celeste?*" Leone asked, piteously, shrinking back from the outstretched hands of the sorely-tempted, sadly-sinning and wretchedly-repentant woman.

"I am Celeste!" was the low reply, as the tears streamed over the faded cheeks of the once vivacious French girl, who had been through the waters of torture and torment, and who had learned long ago that a virtuous, and untempted woman, has no sympathy for the Magdalen. Pity, she may feel. Mercy, she may plead. But that sympathy, which is so dear and sweet to every heart, can come to her only from one of her kind. And had a fallen and repentant woman come into the room at

that moment, Leone might have pitied and felt sorry for her, but Celeste alone could have offered her that exquisite sympathy, which reaches from heart to heart, and forges a link that no time can break.

'I am Celeste!" she continued, "and though I have tried to hide my identity, and never meant you to know, yet somehow you have found me out; and I see by your expression that you are pitiless, merciless; though God in heaven knows, I should not presume to hope for mercy from you, *whichever* you may be. In either case, I have wronged you altogether too deeply. I told you once that I was the chief of sinners. You know why, now. But I believe that God has forgiven me; that Christ interceded to save me; all of which shows that the love and mercy of our Heavenly Father can in no way be compared to the mercy of humanity, be it ever so human. Even one who may be my own flesh and blood, shrinks and turns away from the erring, but repentant woman,——"

"Do not say that!" Leone interrupted hastily, and continued with more honesty than tenderness: "Every instinct of my being shrinks from you. You cannot be my mother. No, no, you cannot."

Celeste shrank and shivered under these scathing words, and sinking upon her knees,

raised her hands and her streaming eyes toward heaven and Leone.

"Don't!" she cried, "O, Mees Leone, don't say anything more! If you should learn that I am your wretched mother, you would be sorry for what you have already said.

With a shuddering moan, Leone acknowledged to herself the truth of these words; but to Celeste she said:

"I do not like to see you kneeling in this abject misery. Arise, please, and—let me—hear—your side—of the story."

Celeste arose, and sinking into a chair, turned away from the too searching eyes opposite, and clasping and unclasping her hands commenced:

"I am a French woman, as you already know. I came to this country when a mere child, with my father, who died when I was but fifteen. My mother died before we left France; and from the age of fifteen, I was dependent upon myself, with the exception of a thousand dollars, which father left me. Of course, I went out to service. What else has a girl to do, thus left alone, who is not trained to fill any other position? I was pretty, witty and lively, and at the age of seventeen, went to live with—— your——Mrs. Bernard Trent. She was very kind and pleasant at first, and made a companion of me, and for a time, I went everywhere

with them, and was introduced as their friend, *Mademoiselle Lascelles.*

"But at last a cloud arose, and I, O *Mon Dieu!* I was to blame! I see it now; but my French love of flattery and attention did it all. I dressed to please Monsieur Trente, and when he came into *le-maison*, I would strike my most attractive attitudes, and smile, like the idiot I was, up into his face; until at last Monsieur became very attentive, ah me! too attentive; and I learned, when it was forever too late, that I was, oh! so much in love with the man, who had a wife. But he told me, (forgive me, Mees Leone; but I must tell it even if it make you very angry,) he told me it made no difference. There was no other life. We should get all the happiness out of this we could; and it was not wrong for us to love each other, else we wouldn't. And—and—oh, Mees Leone! Mees Leone! *I fell.*"

Here the woman stopped, and Leone witnessed such a scene of remorse and agony as she had never seen before, as the poor repentant sinner thought again of those days, when her criminal love had wrought such a flood of misery for more than one, just as sin of all kinds must in the end bring its disastrous results. For it is written, and God's laws are immutable. He does not punish us; but he has

told us the inevitable result of sin and crime, and it *will* come.

She rose from her chair and walked back and forth in agony of spirit, clasping and unclasping her restless hands, and whispering as if to an unseen presence:

"*Miserere Jesu Miserere.* O that I had had a different training in my early life!"

"I thought you were sure you had been forgiven;" Leone said, on the impulse of the moment, as she listened to the dreary chanting of Celeste's *Miserere.*

The woman turned upon her with a flash of her magnificent dark eyes, all the old impetuous, French fire of her girlhood roused, and Leone quailed, as she saw for a moment before her the Celeste of twenty years ago. She realized now what Celeste Lascelles had been; what a dangerous girl to take into the house of a susceptible man, whose principles were neither pure nor strong. But Celeste was speaking again, in that rapid excited way of hers:

"I believe I am forgiven. But can I ever forget what I have been? Can I ever cease to cry out to God for pardon? If you take a white lily and drag it through the mud, the most careful cleansing in the world will not make it a pure white lily again. The marks and scars cannot be effaced. The natural, God-given bloom is gone. It is, at best, but a soiled white

lily, washed as clean as possible; but God knows how dark it once grew!

"Oh! if I could reach the ears of every girl on earth, and make them see my life as it has been, how gladly I would do it. How gladly I would tell them never to listen to the persuasive words of men who think nothing of the ruin of a soul. I would warn them never to yield in any way to man's blandishments. But more than all the rest, I would say, Never try to attract the attention of men from mere love of attention, as I did; for I believe the girl who does this is doomed already. And the majority of women can blame themselves for their own fall, and for pulling down with them, *men whom they might have saved.*

"But forgive me, Miss Leone!" Celeste continued, sadly, coming back to her English and her chair. "Forgive me for dragging you through all this, and with your permission, I will go on again."

"Yes, please;" Leone replied, drearily, and her hostess continued:

"Neither you, Miss Leone, nor any other pure-minded girl, can ever form any idea of the suffering of mind through which a girl passes when she knows that she has made herself a social outcast. One idea permeates her brain, that is, to hide her shame. I was not a Christian then, nor even a good girl. Had I been

either, I could not have fallen; but if I had been in any way good, I would not have done what I afterward did. I had always looked upon Henry Harper, a quiet, respectable mechanic, sober, industrious and honest, as very far beneath me, and laughed at his would-be attentions. Now, however, I desperately resolved to marry him.

"I met him in my most enticing way, the way that had already caused my ruin, and when he proposed marriage, I eagerly accepted him and named an early day. There is but little more to tell. I was married to Harper, and I meant to be true to him; and if he had not cast me off, I should have been a good wife. But men like Harper do not take women like me on trust; and his anger was fearful to witness when he discovered my secret; and he cast me adrift. He swore that he would be avenged on Bernard Trent, and that he would never cease to persecute his legitimate child.

"Mrs. Trent was very ill, and I was very careless in those days, and neither of us watched or cared for the little strangers, of which hers was a few days the elder. We lived on the same street, and our nurses were friends and often together with the two little ones, until I was obliged to dismiss Kate; and that very day Mag, Mrs. Trent's girl, offered to take my baby out with her charge, and I let her go.

When she brought the child back at night, she was flurried and excited, and solemnly declared she didn't know them apart; and I could see that Mag was too drunk to know anything; and I, poor fool that I had been, did not know my own child well enough to tell her apart from Margaret Trent's daughter. And Harper's letter, received that night, only added to my confusion, and the mystery of the affair; and from that day to this, I have never had any light, but groped and stumbled more and more in the dark, trying to imagine that Leslie was mine, but ever haunted with the conviction that she was Margaret's.

"I moved from one place to another, vainly seeking oblivion and peace; but Harper always knew where I was, and his vengeance always followed. I had but one settled purpose in life: to educate Leslie, and keep her in the path of virtue and honesty. I felt that I was lost, and from all I knew of the Christian religion, helplessly and hopelessly lost. I grew careless of myself, was morose and cross and fault-finding; used unpleasant language, and withal, took the very course to drive Leslie into the path that I had trod, when one Sunday, just for the sake of going somewhere, (or at least, I thought so then, but I know now that Jesus led me;) I went to a little, out-of-the-way church, in a very unfashionable locality, taking Leslie with me, to

hear 'a new preacher,' as the people said. When I came away from that church, my heart was changed. He did not preach of God's eternal wrath, and of sinning away the day of grace. But he told of the love and mercy that endure forever; and of the tender compassion of Jesus Christ. I knew that there was hope for me, even me. If I prayed, God would hear and forgive; as he has done. That man was Earle Thornton, and he had just commenced preaching. I have heard him only once since then, but I believe he is in the right path, and that the Holy Spirit is with him.

"I have told you my story, Miss Leone. Perhaps you will think that one so wicked as I have been, and so low in the social scale, can never rise any higher; but I have told you the truth, and I believe God has accepted me as one of his children. I only ask this much clemency from you: *Keep this from Leslie.* If she *is* my child, I don't want her to know how bad her mother has been. The secret came unavoidably into your possession. It is bad enough to feel your indignation and scorn; but Leslie need not know."

She said this so humbly and so pleadingly, that Leone, who had never meant to tell Leslie, even, feeling that she could not, answered gravely:

"The secret shall go no farther, Madame. Leslie shall not know."

And neither of them could see the shivering, trembling, horrified, half-frozen girl, who had been standing in the little, cold hall, and had heard and understood every word.



CHAPTER XII.

A NEW LIFE.

THE winter days wore away, and spring came smiling sweetly upon the earth; giving promise of vernal bloom and of plentiful harvests, of fruits and grains, and of work for the laborers of every class. And the laborers always welcome the advent of spring. The long, dark and miserable winter is past; the birds sing, the buds expand; everything in nature says, "Take heart again, have courage, for God is here, to help you on." And no one feels this cheering influence like the poor man, who has to depend upon his hands for the sustenance of life, for himself and family.

He goes forth to battle with renewed vigor and strength, and the daily struggle for bread goes on, with an added feeling of reverence, even in the hearts of those who *seem* to know no reverence.

Something like this was in the heart of Grandfather Trent, as upon that mild April day, he

stood and watched his chickens scratching for worms in the newly-plowed garden, and felt that even the feathered tribe were glad that spring had come. With his hands behind him, he turned and walked slowly toward the house, casting his eyes up to the weather-beaten shingles, and the disconsolate clapboards, and shaking his head, muttered aloud:

"'Twont last much longer, that's a fact. It's stood here for nigh onto fifty years now, and I never had to lay out much for repairs; but the old shell looks as though it needed a dose of stimulants. It does, I declare. And all Leone can do inside don't make a cent's worth of difference on the outside, as I see. After all, it ain't much use for a woman to dig and scrub, and scrub and dig, if a man never does anything but litter up. No 'tain't much use for one, when all the rest take pains to bring in the dirt.

A dim idea of the injustice of it floated through grandfather's brain, of Leone working with all her energy to keep things tidy, and himself and Sam, and even grandmother, daily and hourly making her task harder by their carelessness. And full of this idea, he came into the house, without pausing to wipe his boots on the old piece of carpet lying at the door for that purpose, and leaving the print of

his boots at every step on the newly-cleaned floor, sat down with the remark :

"Seems to me, Josephine, we ought to be a little more particular 'bout things."

"What about?" Mrs. Trent cried sharply, as she gave the fire a vigorous poke, and scattered the ashes over the brightened hearth, and left them, as she always did, without any thought of Leone's previous labor or the work she was making for some future moment. And so strong was the force of habit to both, that neither noticed what they had already done. And Mr. Trent continued :

"Why, you see, Leone's a great hand to keep things slick, and it 'pears to me that we ought to help her a little."

"O sho!" exclaimed Mrs. Trent, with an upward toss of her head, which always indicated displeasure. "I'm as neat as Leone, any day. More'n all that, I kept house 'fore she was born. She puts on too many airs, anyway, for anyone that don't know whether she's any right to her name or not."

Grandmother was evidently very much displeased at something, as her words indicated, and like all unjust and ungenerous natures, she visited her wrath upon Leone's head, for her father's sins.

"Now mother, if I was in your place, I would n't say nothing about that;" the old man said,

in a low voice. "In my way of thinking, Leone ain't to blame for what her father did."

And poor Leone, who had heard every word, forgave the tracks upon the kitchen floor, but the ash-covered hearth was not so easy to overlook.

But it was all forgotten at night, when Sam came home with the announcement:

"Nate Deane told me that his wife said I must be sure and tell you that Mr. Thornton is coming, and will preach Friday night and Saturday and Sunday morning and evening in the old Channing chapel, and she says you must surely go to hear him."

A strange thrill shot through Leone's heart, a feeling that she had never known before. Earle Thornton coming, this very week! Coming before May! Coming in answer to the prayer she had offered that night in agony of spirit, after she had parted with Celeste, and felt that the waters had come into her soul, that her night of despair was with her, that there was no hope and no help unless the Bible was true, and Jesus the Son of God!

Earle Thornton was coming, but she had asked it as a symbod of the truth, and she had promised to obey the divine command, "Follow me."

She looked up with a strange new light in her eyes, and said in a low voice:

"I shall be glad to hear Mr. Thornton."

"Thornton!" Mrs. Trent exclaimed. "Isn't he that young fellow that comes here sometimes, and preaches over there in the Channing chapel?"

"Yes;" Sam readily replied. "He was here when he first begun to preach, and got up a stunning revival, and made the ministers all mad, 'cause his converts wouldn't join their churches."

"What church does he belong to, anyway?"

"Don't belong to any. Don't believe in denominations and such like."

"Humph! a great Christian, I should think: don't know what church he belongs to! What does he call himself?"

"Earle Thornton;" Sam answered gravely, with a twinkle in his eye, as he looked across the table at his cousin.

"Well, what name does he call his religion?"

"Oh! Christians, I s'pose. That's what Mary Deane says."

"Christians! so do they all call themselves Christians. I'd have a name, or quit preachin'!"

Friday evening came, and Mr. and Mrs. Deane called for Leone to accompany them, going much out of their way for the purpose; but Mary was afraid Leone would not go, or else knew well that she would not venture out alone, and

that Sam was quite unlikely to attend any place of worship.

The old Channing chapel stood a little out of the busy, thriving town of Lakeside, and was erected years ago as a place of worship, on the Channing road, which gave it its name, and though long abandoned as a church, for the more fashionable edifices in town, yet it was occasionally used for lectures, temperance and prayer-meetings, by the unpretentious laboring class, on the outskirts of the thriving little city, and for the reception of evangelists who sometimes came to Lakeside, and who always succeeded in getting a hearing in the old Channing chapel.

All this, Nathan and Mary Deane told Leone, as they hastened towards the Channing chapel; and Leone, in a trepidation of nervousness, thought of the promise she had made to God, and felt that she must keep it. She pulled Mrs. Deane's sleeve nervously, and said, just before they entered the vestibule of the chapel:

"Do you know I have made up my mind to be baptized, if Mr. Thornton preaches the way that I already believe is right?"

"Have you? I'm sure you will then, for he preaches the doctrine adhered to by the writer of 'DAY DAWN,' and that advocated in 'THE

WORLD S HOPE.'" * That is what you believe, isn't it?"

"I hardly know; I cannot tell; but I've got a peculiar theory of my own, and—I—believe my Bible sustains that theory. I have never yet heard a minister with whom I agreed."

"You'll agree with Brother Thornton;" said a bluff, out-spoken carpenter, who had overheard this last remark, and who had become acquainted with Leone of late, and liked her immensely, as he held out his hand with a hearty "How-d'ye do?"

"Good evening, Mr. Brantly. I hope I shall;" she said, both in greeting and answer.

"Just wait till you've heard him. If you don't say he's the smartest man you ever heard, then I'll give up."

Leone smiled half-sadly, half-proudly, as she thought of the men she had heard, some of the most eminent lecturers in the world, and yet but very few sermons; as her father thought religion was trifling and childish. But she had heard Talmage and Beecher and many eminent divines of the Cleveland and other churches; but it was long ago, in her early childhood, when she attended divine worship with her mother, and before she was old enough to realize her need of Christ. Still she had heard them, she thought; and later, she had heard

* See Notice at end of this book.

Ingersoll, also Gough on temperance, and many other temperance workers and political speakers. It was quite absurd to tell her that Earle Thornton, from quiet little Glendale, was the most talented, or interesting speaker she had ever heard. Besides, she *had* heard him, and thought but little of the hearing either. She said:

"I have heard Mr. Thornton."

And then they went into the chapel, which was already nearly full; and it was quite necessary for our party to sit down in front.

Earle Thornton was in the reading-desk, and had already risen to read the first hymn, and Leone by special arrangement, was to preside at the organ.

After the reading of the lesson and the singing of the hymns, the text for the evening was announced, and Leone listened as in a dream, to the voicing by another of her own thoughts and hope and faith. The plan of the ages was spoken of, God's wonderful plan of salvation for the whole human race, which covers the Patriarchal, Jewish, Gospel and Millennial ages. Through Christ, he reveals himself, and through his love and truth he saves. God is too often looked upon, and altogether too often pictured, as a stern, unbending judge, who required the life of his only Son to appease his wrath against

a world of sinners lost; when all the while, the Son was only the Father revealed, or in other words, the Father was in the Son reconciling the world to himself. That is the saving power, the power that enlightens the world, and gives hope to all the ages. Take the Bible, and arrange it in its successive ages, and you have the key which unlocks the mystery of the Word of God. The types, symbols, and prophecies at once grow clearer and plainer. The "good tidings" of salvation, shall "be unto all people," and how can they be unto all people, unless they extend through the ages and all people hear the Gospel of Salvation. The world cannot hear without a preacher, and the world cannot accept and believe, without an understanding heart. It is rank heresy to the word of God to think that he hardens some hearts for the express purpose of future torment. But men are apt to be like what they worship, and the man who worships such a God as this, can hardly be otherwise than narrow, cold and cruel: because he is making an effort to walk in the footsteps of what he worships. Christ is a revelation of the Father; and if Christ is merciful and loving and kind, then the Father can be nothing else. God is *Love*. It is his love and mercy that saves a ruined world. Jesus came to reveal the Father's love, and it is the mission of the church, the bride of Christ.

to reveal the love and glory of the Saviour of men. This the true church will unhesitatingly and unswervingly do; and sooner or later, all men will be reached and saved.

Then the speaker went on to show the relation that baptism sustains to the plan of the ages, in its symbolic or typical sense. As in the days of Noah, eight souls were saved by water, so, says the Apostle Peter, "even baptism doth now save us," not so much the ordinance itself, but what it means, being typical of the death and resurrection of Christ, and of the practical application in us of all that his death and resurrection involves.

Then, by the indubitable proof found between the two covers of the Bible, he showed them that baptism was a duty that every human being owed, in love to the Saviour of mankind. Jesus himself was baptized in the river Jordan, and he has plainly said: "Follow me;" and if we would follow him, step by step, all the way to heaven, we must do the things he so plainly commanded, and not the least of these is baptism. Baptism in itself is not as some would say, "a saving ordinance," but it is a symbol of the real cleansing which Christ alone can give.

And again, *baptize*, from the Greek word *baptizo*, signifies to cover up; in other words, to be *buried* with Christ in baptism; and there is no

other baptism but immersion that can bury or cover up. We may shrink from the truth as we will, and try to substitute something else; there is nothing else and no other way, than by going down into the water, to bury the old body of sin, and rise in the new likeness of Christ Jesus that we have put on. Whosoever is ashamed or afraid to follow Christ in this act is ashamed of Christ himself. Whosoever shrinks from obeying the commands of the Saviour is not ready to reign with him in glory and inherit the kingdom of God.

And Leone, as she listened to the fervent words of the speaker, felt that in her heart she had known and understood it all her life, only it had lain dormant and unrealized, until the Lord saw fit to rouse her by sorrow. Sorrow purifies and ennobles some natures, and Leone's was one of these. The trials of the few past months had brought her face to face with Jesus and her sore and dreadful need of a Saviour. She had never heard the Scriptures expounded like this before; so nearly coinciding with her own half-formed, but now more clearly-defined views.

There was no longer any doubt in her mind as to the need of baptism. And after the benediction had been pronounced, she stood a few moments in silence, waiting for the throng to press around Mr. Thornton, with the right hand of

fellowship and many expressions of goodwill, and she then looked up just in time to meet his eyes, raised from speaking with Mary Deane, and looking curiously at her. She came forward at once, and without hesitation gave him her hand.

"I am glad to meet you again, Leone;" he said, simply, and no one could have guessed from his quiet demeanor how his heart was stirred to its depths by this meeting, and the words Mrs. Deane had whispered:

"Leone Trent said she should be baptized, if your religion agreed with hers."

"Did it?" he wondered, as he looked into her proud, unfathomable eyes, so long schooled to hide the feelings of her heart. Oh! how he had prayed for the conversion of Leone Trent; and had the Lord answered his prayer, and brought it about in his own good time!

Her lips quivered a little, but at first she said nothing. The old memories were back again, too strongly and forcibly. She was standing again by her father's grave, in the Glendale cemetery, and this man was the only link between this world and the next, that she could then recognize. Now she saw another and a brighter Link—a living, golden, dazzling light, even the Lord's Christ.

"I will see you tomorow;" she said, briefly, almost coldly; "I am to dine at Mrs. Danton's."

And then she stepped back to make way for two that she had not seen before, although she felt instinctively that they were there,—Celeste and Leslie. Celeste bowed, half-deprecatingly, and then went to meet Mr. Thornton; but Leslie gave her a haughty nod, and with a sad feeling of pity and love, Leone turned again, to see Fred Barstow standing near.

"Good evening, Miss Trent; delightful evening!" he commented, with a bow and smile intended to be exquisitely finishing, but which were entirely lost upon our matter-of-fact heroine, who had the good sense to mark Fred Barstow down for just what he was worth, and she answered his salutation with only a very brief and polite:

"Good evening!"



CHAPTER XIII.

MORE LIGHT.

THERE was a short service Saturday morning in the Channing chapel, but not so well attended as the night before; for everybody cannot attend church on Saturday morning.

But Leone managed to get everything in readiness for the day and the morrow, although Mrs. Trent spitefully remarked that she thought it would look much better to stay at home and help her, than to go "trapesing" off after a crazy fanatic.

"But there isn't much to do, only just to get the dinner and supper on the table. The baking is all done and the house clean;" Leone faintly reiterated; for someway she always felt afraid of offending this austere, spitefully speaking grandmother, in whom the milk of human kindness seemed to be forever soured.

"It don't make any difference, I s'pose, whether I feel like work or not. I ain't of any ac-

count any more, even in my own house."

There was a terrible struggle in Leone's heart as to whether she should go or not. She did not wish to offend her grandmother. Above all, she wanted to do right. Was it right to leave grandmother to do the work? Could she not wait for the evening service, or come home after the morning meeting, and thus forego the pleasure of dining at Mrs. Danton's with Mr. Thornton?

Grandfather settled the question at once, by looking up from his newspaper with the remark:

"Let Leone go if she wants to. She's done enough, I should think, to earn the privilege; and I'll see to the dinner and supper both, and Sam can wash the dishes."

"I s'pose she'll go if she wants to. She always does, for all of me"

Grandmother was not very kindly disposed toward Leone. She more than half believed that she was the daughter of that French girl, Celeste, and in her heart secretly despised her. She didn't like her anyway, for she knew that she felt above them and thought she was better than the rest of the family. And Mrs. Trent's was one of those narrow natures that can see no worth in anyone who is not wealthy. The Hermons were her ideal people, and Mrs. Hermon and her daughters models of excellence. And she never could forgive Leone for calling

Mrs. Hermon an ordinary woman, with not one half of the wit and talent of Mrs. Nathan Deane, who could not enter the charmed circle that held Mrs. Hermon. The Hermons were near neighbors, and Mrs. Hermon condescended to call occasionally at the Trent cottage, because she knew no evil of them. And Mrs. Trent was an inveterate gossip, who supplied Mrs. Hermon with news, *ad infinitum.* Mrs. Trent took pains, upon Leone's first advent at the farm, to inform her neighbor that her granddaughter was brought up a lady. Her father was rich but lost his property before he died, and now they had to take care of his girl, who had some mighty fine notions for a poor girl,—playing and singing and writing music and painting pictures.

And Mrs. Hermon smiled in her supercilious way, and thought Liss Leone's music could not amount to much, or she would make it support her. And then she thought proudly of her three daughters, who were all going to be first-class pianists, in her estimation, at least.

"You are very kind, grandpa;" Leone replied with quivering lips; "and I wish you and grandma and Sam would all come down to the chapel this evening and hear Mr. Thornton, won't you?"

"No-o, I don't want to hear him," grandpa

said, laughing, "but I'm willin' the rest should, if they want to."

"Land a' massy!" grandma exclaimed, with an impatient toss of her head, "I guess if I was goin' to hear a man preach, 'twould be some one that wa'n't ashamed of his religion."

Leone turned away without any farther remarks, and sped on her way to the chapel. She entered the vestibule at the same moment with Celeste and Leslie.

"Good morning!" she said bravely, giving her hand to Celeste for the first time since that memorable day in the cottage.

Celeste took the slim, black-gloved hand in hers, and pressed it wistfully, while her lips trembled a little; but Leslie turned away with the same haughty bow of the night before. What was the matter with Leslie? Ah, Leone! you did not see the girl that stood and listened in the cold that day, and being far less noble than yourself, was sure she was the lawful daughter of Bernard Trent, and you——a nameless child.

It had taken strong hold of Leslie's mind, but she had kept the secret well, and only despised Leone and Celeste, and felt herself bitterly aggrieved, and meant, at no distant day, to have her wrongs righted. She did not know how much she owed to Fred Barstow's sly insinuations, for Fred had partly guessed the secret,

and meant to work it all out to suit himself.

But Leone forgot about Leslie, in listening to the sermon of the morning, and leading the singing, as before; and after the service, and the usual greetings and hand-shakings, Mrs. Danton, in triumph, took her off to dinner.

In the little parlor, Leone expressed her wish to follow the Saviour in being baptized, and Mr. Thornton asked her the questions he usually put to candidates for that ordinance:

"You believe on the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and your Saviour?"

"I do;" was the clear, unfaltering reply.

"And you desire to obey him and to be baptized into the body of Christ?"

"I do, if I understand you correctly. I cannot conscientiously join any church. I see no warrant in the Bible for denominational churches. I believe there is but one church, and I have no creed or discipline but the Bible."

For some reason Mr. Thornton did not wish to question her very much. He felt in his heart that God had answered his prayer, and Leone was thoroughly consecrated to the service of the Master.

"Do you think that everyone will have a chance of salvation, Leone?" Mr. Thornton asked as they lingered over their dinner, in sprightly conversation.

"I believe, as Christ came to seek and save

the lost, that his work will not be accomplished until every lost soul is found and saved;" she returned, modestly, but hesitantly, for as yet she had not heard her pastor's opinion (She felt that he was her pastor now.) of this much disputed question, and she did not know but he might directly disagree with her. But whether he did or not, she could not afford to deny her faith in God's plans, nor his everlasting love.

Earle made no reply, and Leone gravely continued:

"You have not said whether *you* believe this or not."

Then indeed the serious eyes of the young pastor were turned upon his questioner's face, and he replied:

"I supposed you already knew that I have faith in this that amounts to certainty. From the beginning to the end of God's Holy Word, everything points to Jesus as the Saviour of the world; and as you say, he came to seek and save the lost, and the glorious mission cannot be ended, until every lost one is gathered into the fold."

"But how is that going to be done?" Mrs. Danton asked, incredulously; for she was an Adventist; "and the platform of that sect is not broad enough by one or two planks, at least;" Nathan Deane was wont to assert.

Mr. Danton also was an Adventist, but he

was gradually coming to accept the Larger Hope, and like Leone, he eagerly listened for the reply.

"With God all things are possible and easy, and the time must come, you know, when 'Every knee shall bow, and every tongue confess;' and what are confession and worship but the evidence of conversion to the Lord?"

"But what of those who have already died in their sins? how are they to be saved?"

"'As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.' This text is familiar to every one; and it implies that all mankind are the sons of Adam, and having the Adamic nature, a body of flesh and a life of sin, they must necessarily all die. But in Christ they shall all be made alive; which implies that a future opportunity of repentance will be given to and accepted by the deepest-dyed sinners; for God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son; and the 'world' means all mankind. It is made up of the sons and daughters of the race of Adam; and no one is going to reject Christ in the final day, when all eyes have been opened to the enormity of sin, and to the wonderful love of the Father."

"Oh! but that seems too good to be true;" sighed Mrs. Danton.

"Can you imagine anything too good to be

true under the administration of our loving Heavenly Father?"

"But I cannot reconcile it with the parable of the wheat and the tares, and such-like passages."

"Because the tares are destroyed? This parable refers to the church of the Gospel Age, and plainly shows that sin of all kinds must be destroyed out of it before the Millennium can dawn upon the world. When the tares are utterly destroyed out of the church, the firstfruits unto God, 'Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.' And then will follow the millennial reign for the blessing of the world of mankind.

God hates sin, but not the sinner. Christ at the crucifixion prayed the Father to forgive them, for they knew not what they did. We all die in Adam; we *must* die in him; but when we are all made alive in Christ, there is no room for a personal second death. When men are brought forth from the grave, or from the death state, then the judgment process begins, by means of which, as by fire, their *lower condition* will be destroyed, which is the true second death. This is how men are to be made alive in Christ, and put on immortality; and a life of endless progression begins.

"But you are a Universalist, if you believe that everyone will be saved."

"No; not according to the general terms of the doctrine of Universalists. I am often called a Universalist, but it doesn't hurt me, nor the Gospel Plan of the Ages, and it does not change God's plans in the least. I believe in the final restitution of all things.—Acts iii. 21. I cannot believe the Bible and believe anything else. There are too many plain passages of Scripture, to allow any other belief;—as for instance, Matt. xvii. 11, also xiii. 41; and in Colossians, this passage, "And having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven."

"Perhaps 'things' do not mean men and women."

"It means whatever exists, as defined by Webster,—a separate being, animate or inanimate. And certainly nothing needs reconciling to the Lord, like his sinful and rebellious children."

"I'm afraid it isn't orthodox."

Mr. Thornton smiled,—a smile of rare and winning sweetness,—as he answered:

"It is Gospel, nevertheless. It is the Word of God."

"Then what is the use of preaching, if everybody is going to be saved?"

"It should be observed that those who hear and obey the Gospel in this age become kings

and priests in the millennial reign, to bless the nations. But aside from this, are we not commanded to preach the gospel?—to carry the good news unto all the earth? And how can a man see if he has no light? We must let our light shine, whether it be small or great, that some one may see to climb the rugged paths, that lead away from the dread abyss. There are but few, when they understand the fullness of God's love, but want to draw nearer to the throne of grace. Love can reach men, when fear would have no effect upon them. A man converted by love is a man converted forever. But a man converted through fear rarely remains a staunch and steadfast Christian; which proves that he was not converted at all, but merely moved upon by fear of punishment. The grace of God was not with him."

"Perhaps he didn't seek the grace of God."

"Quite likely he did not; but it is not always necessary to seek the grace of God in order to have it."

Now, indeed, Earle Thornton's auditors looked at him with curious eyes. What did he mean? Was he talking like a sane man and a Christian?

Mrs. Danton, always eager, curious and impatient, exclaimed:

"Why, Mr. Thornton! what *do* you mean?"

"Just what I said. Did Saul of Tarsus seek

the grace of God? Was he not arrested on his way to Damascus, where he was going with the mad desire to persecute the followers of Christ? Did not the grace of God seek and save him, then and there? Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He is always seeking and saving, and many of us are converted without any previous desire for the grace of God. Do you not think so, Leone?"—turning suddenly to this girl, whom Jesus had persistently sought and saved, without any special desire, or feeling of the need of salvation, on her part. Did she not think so? Ah! did she not know it? She raised her eyes timidly, and replied:

"I not only *think* it, but I *know* it. Jesus sought and saved me, and I thought or cared but very little about the grace of God."

"Then you don't believe there's any hell, or any punishment?" Mrs. Danton questioned.

"Certainly I do, but not in the way that some believe it. God has distinctly shown us right from wrong, and the inevitable results of sin and crime. Effect always follows cause. If we disobey, and break the laws, the punishment *must* follow. If we commit sin, we must pay the penalty. We will be punished according to our sins, but not forever and ever, not in endless torment nor in hopeless death. There is nothing that can save us from the wrath of God

but repentance. God always hears those who cry unto him; and he never punishes those whom he has forgiven."

Then there was hope for her father, for her erring father, Leone thought. At the appearing and kingdom of Christ, he should have his opportunity, and he would not reject it then. He would atone for his sin to Celeste and Margaret, to Leslie, and herself. And Leone's heart was singing peans of thanksgiving for the final salvation of her mistaken father. There was no anger and resentment in her heart towards him now. It was all gone; she had left him in the hands of a merciful Judge, and she knew that Jesus would plead his case more successfully than she could; she could trust in him at all times, for he could bring good out of evil, and light out of darkness. The way was clear before her now; she knew her duty, and she meant to do it.



CHAPTER XIV.

NEAR THE CROSS.

THEY seemed very strange to Leone, those days that followed; until the memorable hour of her baptism in the waters of the river that sang on its way, rejoicing under the beautiful glow of an April sun and an April day, almost as mild as summer, and which seemed to Leone like a special benediction upon her and the new name she was about to assume. But never will she forget the strange, new sensation in her heart, and which she did not at the time understand, but which was fully revealed to her afterwards.

She felt as if she were going to her grave; as if she had died and were to be buried, but still stood by in the flesh, powerless. She could not talk about herself to any of the well-meaning people present. She could not even smile. She did not regret the step she was about to take; she would not go back if she could; but ever before her was the vision of her burial, which

she understood afterward. Her old body of sin was to be buried in the waters of baptism, and she to rise in the new life and body to be put on. Oh! beautiful thought, and feeling, and hope! Ye that have faith and trust in the Lord Jesus shall see and dwell in the New Jerusalem coming down from God out of heaven, like a bride adorned for her husband.

It was very simple and impressive, that ceremony on the bank of the flowing river. The prayer of faith and love that went up to the vault of heaven, and the hymn sung:

"Jesus, keep me near the cross;"

Leone will never forget. She knew then that she was nearing the cross. It was a farewell cry to her old life, soon to be buried forever. Henceforth she must cling to the cross of Christ. And a great flood of gladness entered her heart when she came up out of the water, knowing that she had followed the example of Jesus of Nazareth, her Lord and Saviour.

The warm-hearted people who had come to witness her baptism now flocked about her with kind words and loving hand-clasps, and then hurried her away to get into dry garments again.

The afternoon was still spent as in a dream. But at Grandfather Trent's she received no sympathy. For the time being, they very politely ignored the whole affair. Grandmother could

not yet find words to express her indignation and scorn, because Leone had made a fool of herself. Grandfather did not know whether to regard it as a foolish thing or not, and Sam had simply nothing to say.

But it soon came, the sharp flood of temptation, proving to poor Leone that the Christian life had only commenced at the waters of baptism. Thenceforth it must be a sharp and continual struggle with the prince of darkness, who is constantly digging pitfalls and laying snares to catch the unwary.

As soon as the wandering Israelites had crossed the Jordan, and stood in the promised land, the land of Canaan, what should confront them but the frowning walls of Jericho? So Jericho confronts the Christian at the first opportunity, sometimes as soon as he has left the waters of baptism or the communion-table; and Leone knew very soon that her Christian life was to be full of temptation and trial. The devil tempted Jesus, and renewed the attacks all through his ministry; so Christians need never despair when he appears in any guise to them, but only pray for strength to resist, and it will be given them.

Grandmother Trent did not believe in the Bible. She could see no sense in it. It was to her nothing but a story, and some of it perfectly ridiculous. And so when Leone asked her

one day why she never read in the Bible, Mrs. Trent answered:

"Read the Bible! Land! I know more about the Bible than you know, or ever will. I've read it through and through and through again."

"But perhaps you didn't quite understand it;" Leone ventured faintly, longing to have her grandmother's eyes opened to the truth, and yet hardly daring to say anything to this irate woman, who had no reverence for God, his works or word. And now she could see that a Christian spirit is the basis of good manners and social culture. No one can be thoroughly gentle in manner, whose heart is not full of love to Christ and humanity. He may cultivate a semblance or counterfeit of the pure coin, which is often done, but the true lady and gentleman, (or better, perhaps, because so written in the Bible, man and woman), will never wantonly hurt the feelings of his fellow-man. The Christ principle within his heart will not allow him to do it.

I regret to say that such women as Grandmother Trent exist all over the world, who thoughtlessly, ignorantly and wantonly inflict torture upon their fellow-beings. And Mrs. Trent now replied sharply:

"Don't understand it! You must think you're an awful smart girl! I should think you

are, to insinuate that your grandmother don't know anything. 'Tain't the first time you've told me I didn't know anything."

"I am sure I never uttered such a word;" Leone commenced, thrown off her guard at once by her opponent's fire and fury. But Mrs. Trent was talking again:

"Who do you think you are, anyway, talking so to your betters?—gadding around the country, too, after Earle Thornton! I should think you'd be afraid of making yourself a laughing-stock to the community. Girls whose ancestors are no better than they should be, ought to be careful, or they may fall in the footsteps of French *fizzledees*."

And although Leone could scarcely help smiling at that last word, which might be found in Webster even if she had never seen it, yet the insinuations were so gross and unkind, that her Trent anger was fired at once.

"How dare you insinuate such things to your own son's child?" she cried in a white heat of passion, full of fear and pain to think her grandmother had in some way become possessed of her bitter secret. But the poor old lady was sneering now:

"Oh! you're a pretty Christian, ain't you? a godly Christian! to get mad at your old grandmother, and use such words as that! Better

go and be baptized again, I should think, and wash away some more sins!"

And Leone, blinded with tears, conscience-stricken, and horrified at what she had done, rushed away to her own room, and throwing herself upon her knees before her Maker, wept and prayed for forgiveness and help.

"Oh! Father in heaven! Oh! Father in heaven! I can never be anything but the most dreadful sinner;" she cried. "Oh! help me, Lord, to be patient, and forgive me! forgive me! and I will try again!"

Poor heart-stricken child! She did not know how many times she would have to try again, and yet again.

But it seemed as though Mrs. Trent could not abate one iota of her tormenting influence, and if Leone spoke of going out into the world and seeking a home elsewhere, she would charge her with ingratitude and unkindness. She was getting old and broken-down, and her children and grand-children had always been ungrateful and unkind. She didn't know what she had ever done, to deserve such treatment.

Poor woman! I do not think she did know. I think our Mrs. Trents are all blind, and worship alone the god of self.

And Leone in bitterness of spirit, began to think that her life was too hard to bear, and many times blindly rebelled against the chas-

tening hand; yet her faith and trust in God and his eternal goodness sustained her through these petty trials, which are oftentimes harder to pear in patience than greater ones.

Mrs. Trent was not long in letting her know that she knew all about her fear of being "the other one," and she continued:

"I believe in my soul you are the French girl's child, for I don't believe I could feel so toward any lawful descendant of my own. I always *did* hate the French!"

Every nerve in Leone's body quivered with pain, humiliation and suppressed anger; she tried to control herself, but could not help replying:

"I am willing to go away any time. I had much rather go than live through these daily scenes with you."

"O yes! of course, I have to bear all the blame for everything, seeing you are such a saint! If you only knew what the neighbors think about you, you wouldn't feel quite so uppish."

And with this parting shot, the sharp-tongued old lady began serenely arranging the patches on her new "saw-tooth" quilt. If there was any branch of industry in which Mrs. Trent prided herself, it was piecing quilts; and since Leone's advent, she had done little else than

patch-work, and reading the illustrated story papers.

"I don't care what anybody thinks or says;" Leone began hotly, but stopped suddenly, as the tender words of Jesus floated into her troubled mind:

"Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. Not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

She stopped and turned abruptly to her work again, the homely occupation of dish-washing, and was soon singing softly to herself:

"Jesus, keep me near the cross,
There a precious fountain,
Free to all, a healing stream,
Flows from Calvary's mountain."

Could you expect anything better from our poor Leone, when you think of her parents and grandparents, and look back upon her ante-natal days, and the circumstances attending her birth? The wonder is that the world is as well balanced as it is. But Leone's own trials soon vanished in her anxiety over Leslie.



CHAPTER XV

POOR LESLIE.

ALL through those days, Leslie had hovered strangely aloof, or greeted Leone with distant politeness. Celeste scarcely lifted her eyes when she met her, or if she did, dropped them again in silence.

Now the sweet May days had come, and Leone was thinking:

"I must go and see Leslie. Perhaps it is because I have stayed away so long, when she wanted my advice and help, about those fatal letters. Yes, I must go and see her at once."

And full of this resolution, Leone prepared for her walk, and after briefly stating her destination to her grandmother, who looked up scowlingly from the columns of "The Family Story Paper," but deigned no reply, she set out, and was soon in the town, again going in her rapid, easy gait to Mrs. Boyd's.

"If it were not for Leslie, I could not do it,"

she thought. "God pity me! I have not forgiven Celeste yet."

No, she had not yet forgiven Celeste. She dreaded even now to meet her, while she drew near the half-open door and timidly rapped, thinking with a beating heart of that February day when she learned the story of sin and shame that Celeste had to tell. She remembered now, too, how Sam had told her that Mrs. Boyd's name was not Boyd at all, and that they called themselves Lascelles now, and Leslie's name was Leslie Lascelles.

Celeste herself came to the door, coloring faintly as she met her visitor's eyes, but kindly invited her in, and Leone entered the little parlor once more.

"I came to see Leslie;" she said at once, as she took the offered chair.

"Leslie is out; she is rarely at home now;" was the sad reply.

"Why not now?" Leone queried gravely.

"I do not know. She has never been the same, since, since that day, you know. Sometimes I am afraid she heard our conversation."

"Oh! I hope not;" was the earnest reply. "It would be dreadful for Leslie to know."

Celeste sighed wearily, but continued:

"Perhaps I ought not to tell you, but we are now persecuted by Harper more than ever."

"Oh!" And Leone's hands were clasped

tightly over her heart this time. Leslie was persecuted by Harper; and he had threatened to persecute Bernard Trent's legal offspring. Alas! Harper had never troubled her in the least. She wished that he would, and leave Leslie alone.

She looked at Celeste with dreary eyes, and shuddered as she looked. Was it her mother sitting there, so pale and silent and sad, and she would not forgive her for the sin that Christ had pardoned? or was her mother asleep in Glendale cemetery, by the side of her erring father? Every feeling of her nature claimed the woman who had died years ago, but circumstances all pointed to the woman before her. She changed her position a little, but answered gravely:

"Yes, you ought to tell me. As I know so much, I certainly can endure to know more."

"I'm afraid that Harper's persecutions have driven Leslie wild. We are very poor now, and get nothing to do, and she declares she will not stay here any longer. Sometimes we even go hungry."

"Is it as bad as that? Why have you not told me?"

"Leslie would not hear to it."

"Would not come to her best friend, her sister! But poor Leslie does not know of that! Here!" and Leone's purse was pressed upon

Celeste, who took it reluctantly, but thankfully, for she was indeed in reduced circumstances.

"How long has Leslie been out this time?"

"She left the house scarcely five minutes before you came in."

"I did not see her, but perhaps she went in some other direction. You don't know where she was going?"

"No, I did not ask her. She was dressed in her blue cashmere, and I wondered at the time, why she should wear that particular suit."

"I shall go up town; perhaps I shall meet her."

And Leone, with a courteous good-morning, went out from Mrs. Boyd's house for the last time, and walked rapidly toward town. She had come early, intending to have the entire afternoon with Leslie, and it was now but little after noon. She met Nathan Deane going back to the shop, and he stopped abruptly, saying:

"I found this note this morning on the shop floor, and I have been wishing to see you, and give it to you."

"To me? It is not mine;" Leone replied hesitatingly, as she took the note, impelled by Mr. Deane's manner to accept it whether it were hers or not.

"But I want you to read it, and see what you make of it. I have taken the liberty to read it myself."

Leone's first thought was that it was another threat from Harper, and with trembling hands, she opened the delicately-scented sheet and read

"I have thought the matter over, night and day, and day and night, since I parted with you last. It is a cruel alternative, dear, but I cannot give you up, and I will take the one o'clock train today for Cleveland, and as you deal by me, may God deal by you. I can go easier now since I heard that conversation between C. and L., and do not believe that C. is my mother, and feel that L. is usurping my place. Yours forever and ever. L."

With the rapidity of lightning, Leone's thought grasped the situation. Fred Barstow had induced Leslie to go away with him; and if she left Lakeside on the one o'clock train, ruin, disgrace and dishonor stared her in the face. She gave one despairing look into Nathan Deane's honest eyes and gasped:

"Why didn't you give me this before?"

"I didn't want Sam to know."

"O, yes! what do you know about it?"

"I know that Fred Barstow lost that note this morning, and that he went up to the city on No. 24."

But Leone was already rushing down the back street toward the depot, with a beating heart, and a voiceless prayer for Leslie's salvation. No. 12 was puffing, blowing and steaming out from the station, but Leone rushed up, trying madly to mount the steps of the rear car,

though a dozen pairs of hands were thrust out to detain her; and amid the shrieks of the women, and the cries of the men: "Is the girl mad?" "You can't board that train;" "You will be killed;" etc., etc., Leone sank down insensible on the track.

But long ere this, a man had jumped from the train, which was rapidly getting under motion. He had seen Leone flying down the street, and apparently recognizing her, and feeling troubled over her very peculiar actions, he came out on the platform, and at the risk of life and limb, swung himself down to the ground, just as Leone was making her frantic effort to board the moving express.

"A very fool-hardy and altogether unaccountable thing for a young clergyman to do;" thought some of the by-standers, who recognized Earle Thornton as he hurried toward Leone's prostrate, helpless form, and raised her up, even before anyone else could think what to do.

Then there were eager hands enough to assist him with his burden, and she was carried into the ladies' waiting-room; and on opening her eyes, behold! her young pastor was bending anxiously over her. She was placed gently on one of the hard, uncomfortable seats, and Earle supported her tenderly.

"Oh!" she shuddered, "I *must* follow that train. Did you see her? Have you seen her?"

With forethought and delicacy, Mr. Thornton motioned the curious throng back, and asked:

"Of whom are you speaking, Leone?"

"Leslie;" she whispered. "I was trying to save Leslie."

Oh! the despair in her voice.

"I did not see her, and I was on the train."

"You on the train? Oh! why *didn't* you *stay* there, then, and take care of *her?*"

"Leone, could I stay there and leave you in such peril?" the young minister asked in a voice that thrilled the troubled girl strangely, and looking up, she caught a light in his eyes, that she had never thought to see in the eyes of Earle Thornton. She moved away from his protecting arm, and her head was proudly erect once more.

"Have I offended you?" Mr. Thornton asked, gravely, sadly.

But Leone knew too well how to throw a wooer off his guard. She replied:

"No, for, of course, you were not to blame. You did not know that Leslie was in such deadly peril, but I *must* go to Cleveland at once."

"Will you tell me what you mean? I hope *you* can trust *me.*"

"I know I can trust you; sit down;" she answered half-imperiously, as she shaded her eyes

with her hand; and then, as Mr. Thornton had obeyed her behest, she continued rapidly:

"Leslie was on that train, and if she reaches the city alone and unprotected, she goes to ruin and dishonor."

"Leone!" exclaimed the shocked young clergyman, as though doubting the girl's senses.

The poor girl lifted her face, scarlet with shame and pain, but answered bravely:

"Leslie has gone to meet Fred Barstow. *You must save her.*"

The sharp shriek of a locomotive whistle not far off cut the air like a knife. It was an eastbound freight. Earle Thornton reached over and wrung Leone's hands, and said:

"God helping me, I will save her! Goodbye, and God bless you, faithful friend and sister."

With Earle Thornton, to will was to do, especially when he knew that God and right were on his side. He had but little difficulty in securing a ride on the freight, and as they moved off, he waved his hand in mute farewell to Leone, who stood pale and helpless in the doorway, and then turned silently homeward. She had not the faintest doubt that Earle would find poor Leslie and bring her back again.

But yet she dreaded to meet Sam, whose heart, she knew, had gone out to Leslie, and who could not understand the baseness of Fred Barstow. Poor Sam! he had fumed and chafed

through all these months, over Leslie's apparent infatuation for a man of Barstow's stamp, but somehow felt helpless as a child, and could do nothing to avert the coming blow.



CHAPTER XVI.

SOME TEMPERANCE TALK.

CARLE THORNTON was again earnestly speaking to the people who had gathered in the Channing chapel, trying not to miss an absent face, but knowing in the first moment of his arrival that neither Leslie nor Celeste were there. He did not expect to find poor Leslie, for his mission to Cleveland had been a total failure. He wrote the facts to Leone, and she had replied that he could do no more, for Fred Barstow was home and nothing could be proved against him.

Celeste also had gone away, and no one knew whither. So he did not expect to see her; she had written her pitiful story from its beginning, and sent it to him; but he had hoped to meet Leone. But she was not there; her place at the organ was occupied by Nellie Martin; and at Mrs. Danton's dinner-table, he inquired for the missing girl.

"Leone is not here. She went away soon

after her baptism, and has never returned."

"Where did she go?"

"Where *did* Leone go, mother?" Mr. Danton asked, and Mrs. Danton replied:

"Why, Leone went to Summerville, don't you know? and her grandmother was awfully put out about it, because she went away to find somebody that she thought was lost, though who it was, I don't know for I never could get at the story. But I believe Leone is a good Christian girl."

"O, yes! Leone's a Christian, no two ways about that;" Mr. Danton affirmed in his usual positive way. "She talked one Sunday here on the atonement. What do you think about the atonement, Brother Thornton?"

"The atonement is clearly shown to be reconciliation, and Paul tells us that it was the work of God, in Christ, to reconcile the world unto himself."

"But I thought God through Christ had to be reconciled to the world;" Mrs. Danton observed.

"A very common idea, but it would be very sad to think God needed reconciling to the world, and Christ had to buy his Father's reconciliation with a price, and *such* a price. The view of Christ, as kind and loving, reconciling his Father, and purchasing the freedom of the world with his own blood, makes Jesus a Sub-

stitute for us. And if he is a Substitute, he suffered and died to pay the debt, and consequently a God of justice could not call upon us to pay it again. And in 1. John v. 14, we are told that 'The Father *sent* the Son to be the Saviour of the world.'

"Now, why did not the beloved John, who knew so much of the Saviour, tell us that the Father sent the Son to be the Substitute for the world? Nay, the love of the Father is as boundless as eternity, and whoever thinks that the great and almighty God must have a Substitute to appease his wrath, belittles and grossly caricatures our Heavenly Father. Thoughtful men and women turn away from this idea, saying: 'I believe no such doctrine as this.' But tell them that the loving Father sent his Son to reveal his love and show us the way to perfection; that he came as 'the true light to lighten every man that cometh into the world;' and they will listen. For this is Bible doctrine, and when we teach Bible doctrine, we teach the truth."

"You take the same ground that Leone takes. You seem to be so much alike in your thoughts, you should become better acquainted."

And then Mrs. Danton stopped with a little titter, at the new thought that had struck her match-making brain. Why couldn't it be so? She believed it ought to be. That would make one of the perfect matches of which she had

heard; and then there would be a chance to find out whether it did make any difference with the offspring. Would the children of a perfect marriage be any more perfect than those of an imperfect one? And with a little, fluttering sigh, she looked around on her family, sickly Sarah, nervous, fretful Ida, dissolute Graham, and poor, weak-minded Harry. And then she looked at her husband, and knew in the bitterness of her heart, that there had been but very, very little love between them; that they had married because it was the correct thing to do, and people were expected to marry, and she had never seen anybody that she loved, anyway, and *she didn't want to be an old maid.*

And Mrs. Danton's thoughts voice the correct reason for many a marriage, and tell the story of many an ill-starred life.

Her thought about Leone communicated itself to Earle's brain, for he looked across the table with a faint smile and change of color, but said:

"We are alike in our views, I know."

"What do you think, brother, about the birth, life and death of our Saviour?" Mr. Danton asked.

"In what way do you mean?"

"Was it planned from the beginning?"

"Certainly. God knew what would be done, from the beginning. The birth, life and death of Jesus was not a chance work, nor an inven-

tion to counteract an unforeseen difficulty. It was a part of the great, grand and beautiful plan of our Heavenly Father. All the prophets of old—Jacob, Moses, Daniel, Jeremiah, Haggai, etc.,—foretold it. Jacob said: 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah until Shiloh come, and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.' Now the sceptre is the sign of royalty, which was not claimed by Judah until the reign of David. The last of the royal line of Judah, were the two sons of Herod the Great, who were put to death in the thirty-first year of his reign. Archelaus, who afterward reigned eight years over Judea, was the son of a Samaritan mother. Herod himself died about three months after the slaughter of the babes of Bethlehem; and the tyrant Herod, who ruled in Judea at the the time of the crucifixion, was a son of Herod the Great, but only a tetrarch, under the Roman government and the emperor Augustus. So you see Jacob's prophecy had come to pass; and it seems that no Jew in his right mind could fail to see that the time had come."

"But they did fail to see it."

"Yes, they did, for they were not looking for him to come in that lowly way."

"Just as people now fail to recognize worth without wealth and station."

"Exactly. But the majority of our eminent men and women sprang from the very lowliest

and poorest; as witness Abraham Lincoln, James A. Garfield, Stephen A. Douglass, and a long line of women and men of the present day, among authors, speakers, orators, lawyers, etc. It is said that the great Dr. Johnson only bowed to clergymen and men wearing shovel hats; but Carlyle takes a step ahead, and makes Herr Tenfelsdrochk say that he would 'bow to every man with any sort of hat, or with no hat at all.' And our own Garfield went still farther, saying he always felt like taking off his hat to every boy he met; for who knew the future possibilities in that boy's life."

"Garfield had abundant reason for thinking and feeling so;" Mr. Danton observed.

"And people in that day probably had no idea that that little log-house among the hills of Northern Ohio sheltered the future president of the United States;" Mr. Thornton supplemented, while Mrs. Danton said:

"Then you think we should be careful whom we slight or hurt."

"I think we should never slight anyone, nor hurt his feelings. The man or woman, boy or girl, who suffers from our unkindness today, may live to put us to shame in the future, by his or her superiority. Kindness and courtesy cost but little and they go a great ways."

"Why don't you drink tea and coffee, Broth-

er Thornton? do you think they disagree with you?"

"I think they would, if I were to indulge very freely in either. I agree with Dr. Bock of Leipsic, who writes on the moral effect of different drinks. 'The nervousness and peevishness of our times are chiefly attributable to tea and coffee.' He says the digestive organs of confirmed coffee-drinkers are in a state of chronic derangement, which reacts on the brain and produces fretfulness and lachrymose moods. He further says that fine ladies who are addicted to strong coffee have a mania for acting the persecuted saint. And that the snappish, petulant humor of the Chinese can be ascribed to their immoderate fondness for tea."

"I never thought of that before, but perhaps it will affect one that way;" Mrs. Danton mused, thinking how fond of tea she herself was, and how prone to a fretful temper.

"What do you think are the effects of alcoholic drinks?" Mr. Danton continued; for he always had a great deal to say, a great many questions to ask, and was always eager to gain information, though he sometimes skipped from one subject to another in a very lively manner.

"Beer is brutalizing. The man who constantly drinks it will in time become deadened to the finer sensibilities, and grow into a groveling lump of animal nature. Wine impassions

and inflames. Whiskey infuriates and demonizes, but eventually unmans its object, or rather subject."

"That agrees with the article on temperance that Leone wrote, and read one evening, don't it?" Mrs. Danton asked.

"Yes," her husband replied, "but I don't agree with all she said."

"Why not?" Mr. Thornton inquired, eager to hear more of Leone and her views.

"She thinks the only way to put down the curse of rum is to evangelize the world!" Mr. Danton exclaimed in an indignant voice, that showed at once the strong prohibition sentiments he had imbibed, and the moral fight he believed imminent and necessary.

Earle Thornton smiled, and answered gravely:

"I think Leone is right."

"Don't you believe in prohibition?"

"I may believe in prohibition, and yet be unable to see that the law can save a man's soul."

"But that has nothing to do with it!" Mr. Danton cried in his quick, impetuous way. "The law enforced can save a man from becoming a drunkard, can't it?"

"Hardly, I think. So long as ardent spirits are manufactured, just so long will the drunkard have his drink. The craving of his nature must be satisfied, and he will find the means to satisfy it, law or no law."

"Then, in Heaven's name, how are you going to save him?"

"I am not going to save him. The grace of God alone can save a man from sin and crime. I am but an humble instrument in my Father's hand. If I can succeed in convincing men that they are sinning against God, it is all that I can do. God does the rest. Temperance founded upon Christ is the only lasting and true principle of temperance. The Christian is *always* a temperate man. There may be men who call themselves Christians, whose names are on the church-book, who drink wine and beer, and sometimes become what I should unhesitatingly pronounce *drunk*, but they are not Christians. A Christian never defiles the temple of the living God with such unholy debaucheries."

"Well!" exclaimed Mrs. Lee, another member of the party who had heretofore remained silent, "I don't *know* but you are right, Brother Thornton; but I *do* know that *I* for one, shall still give my time and heart to the prohibition cause. I want to see rum blotted out from the face of the earth. I would glory in the sight of a holocaust of saloons. I would like to see the drunkard-makers brought to the very doors of destitution, that stares their victims in the face. I would organize a band of women, today, if I could, to go through this town, and demol-

ish every vessel of liquor, and burn every dram-shop to the ground."

Mrs. Lee spoke with great emphasis, in a decided, positive tone, that some of our most rabid lecturers could profitably follow. She was excited. In her thoughts, aggressive measures were the only commendable means of putting down the liquor-traffic. But Earle replied mildly with the query:

"Drunkard-makers, sister! Who *are* the drunkard-makers?"

"Why, the saloon-keepers, of course! They deal out their poison to men and boys and women alike. That is plain to be seen."

"Nevertheless, I beg leave to differ."

"Well, who do *you* think they are?"

"I will answer your question by asking another. Do you believe in heredity?"

"To be sure, I do. But I fail to see how that changes the matter."

"If the appetite is hereditary, dated back, perhaps, three or four generations, your present whiskey-dealer is not to blame, is he?"

"Who, then?"

"The parents, or ancestors, themselves, for the broken laws of nature, that have brought a curse upon their offspring. For 'the sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children,' remember, 'until the third and fourth generation.' Hereditary traits very often do not

break out until the third and fourth generation. You can trace it in resemblance of face, as well as character. Thus a person may have red hair, or dark eyes, when the parents have not, but tracing back, you will always find one or more ancestor from whom these traits of feature descended."

If Leone had heard these words, she would have been reconciled to her dark eyes, which resembled neither Margaret Barton's nor Bernard Trent's. And it must be confessed that, since reading Celeste's communication, Earle Thornton had studied the traits of heredity more than ever before. For any subject that touches the heart always has a vital interest for us, and we will study it far more eagerly than otherwise.

"Perhaps you're right, but I shall still put prohibition first;" Mrs. Lee asserted. But Earle returned:

"Not before the religion of Christ, I hope. Wherever a man or a church puts temperance work first, and devotes time, talent and energy to it, that man or church is sure to fall from grace. The living witness to this is the commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." And when we put any work first, we make a god of it, and the result is a fall from grace, on our part."

CHAPTER XVII.

BARSTOW AND BARSTOW.

BARSTOW AND BARSTOW were in trouble. The box-makers had grown independent and refused to work any longer than the hands worked in other shops. Nathan Deane was their speaker, and respectfully informed the Messrs. Barstow and Barstow that the men were unanimous in their determination to work but ten hours a day, and to lose only the time that was really lost. Not a man would ever submit again to being docked two hours for being late five or ten minutes. It was tyranny that no man of spirit would endure. But if they were late in the morning, they would make it up at night.

And the Senior Barstow roughly replied that he was boss yet, and things in his shop had got to go as he said.

But Nathan Deane was imperturable. He was not to be moved from his purpose. The Barstows grew angry, and dismissed the whole

shop-full of men, saying that there was plenty of help to be had on their own terms; but the sequel proved that they were entirely wrong. The men of Lakeside had long known about the tyrannical sway in the Barstow factory, and no one would hire out to the proprietors, under the rules that regulated the factory.

And so Barstow and Barstow were in trouble. The shop had to be closed, and the Senior Barstow went out to drum up hands. The result was a squad of Italian and Chinese laborers from Cleveland; and the factory opened again, while the old hands were out of employment; and Nathan Deane and Sam Marston could not obtain a day's work in any shop. The proprietors, or foremen, where they applied for work, would look at them with severe eyes and frowning countenances, and politely tell them that their services were not needed, or gruffly dismiss them, with the words:

"Not an hour's work for such as you. Anarchy is not a branch of our business."

Most of the other men found odd jobs, and so made a meager living; but Nathan Deane and Sam Barstow were called the ringleaders of the sedition, and no one wanted them. They both knew that the Barstows were trying to starve them out, and that they had visited, or written to, every factory for miles around, warning them against these two dangerous characters. And

when the former once hotly replied that he was not an anarchist; that anarchy was treason against one's government; he received the insolent rejoinder:

"That's just what I mean. You are a poor, low, sneaking thief against *your* government. You belong to the jurisdiction of Barstow and Barstow, just as much as their horses and dogs do. Why! a poor laborer should have no right to whine about rights and government."

And fiery, hot-tempered Nathan Deane lifted his hand to give a well-merited blow; but Mary and the children floated before his eyes with pleading faces, and his clenched hand dropped powerless by his side, while his tormentor sneeringly continued:

"Why don't you strike? Are you afraid of your government? *Coward!*"

But unmindful of that last hiss, Nathan Deane walked slowly away, and the pompous shop-owner could not know what a sublime victory the poor laborer had gained in that one moment of time.

"Never mind;" Mary cheerfully said. "I can work and support our family until you find something to do."

But poor Mrs. Deane soon found that people did not require her services either; and at last she was told plainly that no one would employ

her, unless she left her husband. And the shocked and indignant woman asked:

"What shall I leave Nathan for? We never had any trouble. He is always kind in his family, and a good provider when he has work."

"But he is a rank communist. He believes the laborer as good as the capitalist. Such sentiments are dangerous to the well-being of society, and should be plucked out by the roots, my husband says, and they will be nipped in the bud, at once."

And Mary Deane went slowly homeward, entirely disspirited. The last place had been tried. She had failed, and it almost seemed as though God had forsaken his own. She recounted her miserable defeat to her husband, and after a long time in painful meditation, he raised his eyes saying half-ashamed, and yet anxiously:

"I thought you believed in prayer, Mary."

"I do."

"Why don't you pray then?"

"I have."

"And God didn't hear you?"

"I don't know;" she said drearily.

A curious light came into Nathan Deane's eyes, and he continued:

"You've prayed for me more than once, I suppose."

"O, yes! Nathan.

He got up and walked twice across the floor, then stopping by his wife's chair, said:

"Do you know what I've been thinking about, little woman?"

"No."

"You remember the select poem that Leone read last children's day, don't you?"

"Yes, about the children."

"Two lines in that poem have always haunted me. They are:

> "Oh! a saint *may* pray for a sinner,
> But a sinner *must* pray for himself."

"Mary let us kneel down; I want to pray for myself."

And down on the bare kitchen floor they knelt, and Nathan Deane prayed for himself. And as he prayed, a light flooded the little room and came into Mary's troubled heart, for she knew that Nathan had found the Saviour. Her prayer of years had been answered.

And after they had risen, he said:

"It has been a sore affliction, Mary, but it is for my good. Even with you and Earle Thornton and Leone before me, to say nothing of other good people, I should never have known how much I need the Saviour, and how necessary it is to pray for myself, if this hadn't all happened. And now, I'm going to start tomorrow morning, and not stop until I find something to do."

But that very evening, Sam Marston came in with the words:

"Have you heard the news?"

"No, what is it?"

"A row in the Barstow shop! Their foreign help broke into a complete riot today."

"How was that?"

"Well, you see they're getting tired of old Barstow's rules. One of the Italians was late yesterday morning, and they docked him two hours. The men were all silent and savage, yesterday, and today two of them were late, and Barstow applied the usual punishment, when the men with one accord broke into an open riot. Barstow and Barstow tried to quell it, but were put into the engine-room and locked in. Then the gang got to fighting among themselves, and the police hearing of the racket, came down, and arrested the whole posse. And now the Barstows are being severely put down for bringing a murderous, foreign element into town, instead of employing their own townsmen."

It was all true, and the next day the Italian and Chinese laborers were sent back to Cleveland, and Barstow and Barstow were once more without help. After several days of idleness among the works, and failure to find men, Fred was sent out to gather in the old hands.

They all respectfully replied that they would

report the next morning at seven o'clock; and though the elder Barstow scowled at the hour, he was obliged to swallow his wrath and meet the men at their own appointment. Then the controversy began, with young Charley Martin for spokesman. Neither Nathan Deane nor Sam Marston were present. Neither had been called on. Charley Martin said:

"We want to know exactly how we stand, Mr. Barstow, before we begin work again."

"You stand in Barstow's factory now;" was the half-joking reply; for the elder Barstow could make a feint of agreeability, if anything were to be gained by it.

"Waiving that, we would like to know what is expected of us."

"Work, of course."

"I should hope so. But plainly speaking, do you expect us to return under the old rules?"

"Certainly."

"Then, I most respectfully decline, for myself and in behalf of my friends."

We will not record the oaths on either side, but the Barstow dialect was always plentifully besprinkled with profanity, and the men were in the minority who did not soil their lips with bad language.

"On what terms, then, do you want to return?"

"First, we refuse to give a minute's time, un-

less it is lost for you We will make up lost time, but we will *never give* any more time."

There was a consultation among the proprietors, and finally a decision that the men should never be required to lose an hour, but would be paid for their time only.

"Second, we will work only ten hours a day."

This was at last agreed to. Then:

"Third, Where are Nathan Deane and Sam Marston?"

"At home, perhaps. I don't know."

"Why are they not here?"

"Because they're not wanted. Neither of them will get another hour's work in *my* shop.'

Charley Martin threw down the hammer he had taken up, and so did every other man in the shop.

"What do you mean, boys?" asked the younger Barstow, in an uneasy tone.

"Not a man here will work for you, unless Nathan Deane and Sam Marston come back on the same terms with ourselves."

It took longer to settle this last difficulty, for the Barstows were extremely angry with Deane and Marston, and jealous of the influence of the former over the men; and that morning, they very decidedly refused to take either of them back. In consequence of this, the men filed slowly out, with a determination of purpose not to be misunderstood. Two days more

of inaction, and irritability on the part of the Barstows, and then Fred was once more dispatched to call the men to work, and to offer the same terms to Nathan Deane and Sam Marston.

Nathan Deane, true to his promise, went out to look for work, but was unsuccessful, and returned the very evening that Fred called with the intelligence that his old place was waiting for him, at the factory. And after Fred went away, Nathan and Mary did not forget to thank God for his remembrance and care.

From the Deane cottage, Fred went out in the country and to the Trent farm. His smart rap on the door brought Sam to answer the summons.

"Good evening, Sam!" Fred exclaimed, with an assumption of friendly familiarity that he was far from feeling. And Sam coolly replied:

"Good evening!"

And he stood holding the door partly open, ready to close it at any moment.

"Come out a moment, won't you? Father sent me out to see you, on business.

Sam quietly stepped outside, and coolly said:

"I am ready to hear you."

Fred Barstow's thoughts were not very complimentary, but he was politic enough not to put them into words. With great suavity, he said:

"Father sent me out to tell you that you can have your old place in the factory if you want it; do you?"

"Maybe I do."

"Well, then, come down in the morning and go to work."

"Is Deane coming back?"

"Yes."

"You didn't like your foreign gang, after all;" commented Sam, a little maliciously, it must be confessed; for Sam was too much like Grandma Trent to take things meekly.

"Confound the fellow's impudence;" thought Fred. "If we weren't in such a hurry, and orders all behind, I wouldn't have him anyway;" but aloud:

"Not much."

And then Fred turned on his heel to walk away; but Sam who had been burning with anger and impatience cried:

"Stop!"

"What do you want?" Fred exclaimed, with a flash of anger and amaze in his voice, as he turned, under the full glare of the moon, and confronted the laborer.

Sam advanced, quite close to this young scion of Capital, and asked in a voice of concentrated passion, that had been consuming him night and day for more than a year:

"I want to know where you have put——*Leslie Lascelles?*"

Fred laughed a laugh that was not good to hear, a laugh that was all the more horrible coming from such young lips, but sneered:

"Were you interested in her too? Sorry for you. I am, indeed."

"You need not be;" Sam returned. "All I want of you is to tell me where she is."

"Can't oblige you, my friend. She may be in San Francisco, for all that I know. Girls with wandering fancies are apt to go anywhere, and with anybody."

And then Fred bowed, mockingly, and hastened away, while Sam with a groan, turned back to the house.

"Leslie, Leslie! I would have died for you!" and his boyish heart almost broke, at the thought of Leslie, fair and frail; or else Leslie, wronged beyond reparation. The mystery still remained unsolved, for Fred had chosen to maintain a dogged silence upon the subject, and his trips to Cleveland might be purely business visits.

And so the Barstow men went back to work, and the factory once more maintained its old brisk rate; but the men were no longer tools in the hands of unprincipled workmen; and the Senior Barstow was heard to say:

"No knowing what will break out next, with that Nate Deane at their head. He reads and says altogether too much for a poor laborer."

CHAPTER XVIII.

HOPE DEFERRED.

THERE was silence and attention in that Summerville church, as Earle Thornton for the first time addressed the people there, in the new Gospel that Christ taught more than eighteen hundred years ago. It was new to them who had never heard the Gospel plan of the ages so wonderfully pictured from Genesis to Revelation. No hope and no help for the lost soul! when Christ came to seek and save the lost, and will not cease his efforts until every one is gathered into the fold. Christ died *for* man, but not *instead* of man. He suffered and died *with* us; that in our sufferings, our sorrows and our death, we may know that Christ was there before us, and his sympathy and help are with us. The Father's love was no less than the Son's, for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.

"This is new theology, and I don't believe it

is orthodox;" one lady said to another, in a half-whisper, after the benediction.

"Orthodox! Good gracious! He's an old Universalist, and I sha'n't come to hear him again!"

A sweeping assertion, truly, considering the advanced age of thirty, or thereabouts, of our friend Earle.

"Universalist, is he? Well I thought as much, though I never heard one of them preach before;" exclaimed another lady; and still another continued:

"I wonder that the trustees allowed him to preach here. I shouldn't think Elder Tomkins would sanction it for a minute."

"Dangerous doctrine! dangerous doctrine!" cried an elderly man, pausing by the little knot of ladies before mentioned. "Did you see how eagerly the young people swallowed every word? Bad thing for them! bad thing!"

"Why so, Brother Washburne?" asked another gentleman, joining the group.

"I'm astonished that you can ask, Brother Townsend. Here's all these boys and girls that we want, but who turn deaf ears to our Brother Tomkins. But they sit here, and swallow every word that this stranger utters."

"Well, but if it is the bread of life, and their salvation, I don't see as it makes any difference who offers it to them."

"Are you blind and deaf, Brother Town-

send? We want these young people *here*, to help support the church. We want their influence and their money."

"O, yes, exactly! I see! Their influence and their money! Yes! But God wants more than that. He wants their souls, and he has sent a man here to touch their hearts and open their eyes."

"Maybe your heart has been touched and your eyes opened;" Brother Washburne exclaimed, testily, for they were out on the street now, taking their homeward walk.

"Well, yes! I confess that I have seen the Christian religion in a new and beautiful light, today, and my heart has been touched. Brother Thornton has done me much good by preaching here today. My old strait-laced Presbyterian creed is knocked all to bits."

"I hope you're not going to turn Universalist."

"Not by any means. Though I must confess that I fail to see why people speak of Universal salvation as though it was the doctrine of the devil. Good, strong Baptists, Methodists, and Presbyterians always do."

"Because it is, I presume. Why! I would rather believe in annihilation, or universal damnation, than to think some people who have died in their sins could live again and be saved."

"But yet if your son should die in his sins, wouldn't you be willing that God should give him a future chance of salvation?"

Mr. Washburne winced; surely his dissolute son needed salvation, if any one's son ever did. He said:

"I am content to let it rest with the Lord. If I am saved and Harry lost, I cannot help it."

"But would you be happy in heaven, knowing your own son was in the torments of an endless hell?"

"Yes, I should be happy. I should not remember Harry, nor his condition. I should be totally oblivious to everything but heaven."

"Are you happy now in thinking of such a condition of things?"

"Well, no, not exactly. But God's will be done."

"I think it will, Brother Washburne; yes, I think it will. Good morning."

And thus the two separated,—the one thinking of his son, as going to that lake of fire and torments forever, the other thinking that even if his son should die in his sins today, he would have a future opportunity for salvation, for Christ came to seek and save the lost, and died for the whole world.

The evening attendance was just as large, and the words of the young minister received as enthusiastically, by the young, and those

outside the church, who had never before heard the Scriptures expounded in this way, convincing men that it was better to love God than to fear him. If we perform our duty through a feeling of fear, it is, at best, but a half-hearted obedience; but if love prompts it, even the humblest deed is beautified and ennobled. The first principle of godliness is love; for God is love, and his mercy endureth forever.

Many a poor, miserable sinner has never found the Saviour in this life, because he thought he had sinned away his day of grace, and had no one to teach him better. And yet the Word of God plainly teaches us that "As in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive." And if all are to be made alive *in Christ*, how can anyone after that die again? According to Revelations, the second death is not the destruction of the person, but of the low condition of the person, or in other words, it is the destruction of death itself. And so death shall be swallowed up in victory.

There is nothing more erroneous than the idea of being made alive in Christ, and then sinning and dying again. If we are made alive in Christ, we are raised in his likeness; and being made like him, as he cannot sin and die, so neither can we. In Luke xx. 35–38, we are plainly told that when men are made alive in Christ, or have part in his resurrection, they *cannot* die any

more, and also that the Lord "is not the God of the dead, but of the living: for ALL live unto him." Mark the word *all*, which certainly does not mean a few.

While these things were being spoken, young Harry Washburne, sitting in the back seat, listened attentively; and at the close of the service, he pressed forward to shake Earle Thornton by the hand.

"I never thought before that there was any hope for me;" he said, in a low voice.

"Why not for you?"

"Well, you see, I'm what they call a ne'er-do-well, a prodigal son, if you like. And there was always too much hell-fire and brimstone in father's religion to suit me, and I won't have it. But someway you talk different from old Tompkins."

"I teach what I find in the Bible, and nothing else."

"That's what father and old—I mean Elder Tomkins, say they do, and they're always quoting, 'Our God is a consuming fire.' I'd just like to know what you'd do with that text, Elder."

For answer, Earle said:

"At half-past seven, tomorrow evening, I am to preach in the Bathurst school-house, some five miles from here. If you will come out, we will see what I can do with that text."

"Troubled with the *big-head*, tremendously, I should say;" exclaimed the elder Washburne, to a little group, aside, who had heard this colloquy between Earle and wild, young Harry Washburne. And the little group smiled and exchanged glances, and nodded, and went home.

Earle had eagerly scanned every face in that congregation, but Leone was not there. He felt sure that if she were in town, and knew that he was to preach, she would come to hear him. He could not question anyone about her, for perhaps his entertainers had never even heard her name. He had hoped so much from this visit, but he had found no trace of the one woman in all the world for him. And though he was perhaps a little saddened at her quiet repulse in the Lakeside depot, yet his love remained unchanged and unchanging. And then again, he thought, perhaps, from that very circumstance, Leone would not meet him again. She might resent his love as well as repulse it. But an active Christian worker, like Earle Thornton, cannot be very miserable over anything. His very love for God and humanity smoothes the most rugged paths, and removes the briars and brambles.

When he rose to speak to the crowd in the Bathurst school-house, almost the first eyes he met were Harry Washburne's, and somehow he felt as though he were there to speak to Harry

that night. He announced his text: "Our God is a consuming fire;" and went on to show that the wheat would be separated from the chaff, the wheat gathered into the Lord's garner, and the chaff burned with unquenchable fire. The wheat is the good, the seed-germ. It shall be saved, and gathered into the garner. The chaff is the worthless, the husk, the wrapping of sin and shame, of iniquity and crime, that covers the inner kernel, and if it were not burned, it would always be in the way of the good. Sin is always in the way of truth and progression, hence sin must be destroyed.

The sculptor hammers and chisels away at the block of marble, until he has made it a perfect statue. So God, the divine Sculptor, in love for the work of his hands, hammers and chisels, unmindful of our cries of pain, but

"Trims us more and more,"

until the spirit attains that perfection which is the likeness of our Saviour.

Gold and silver are tried by fire. They are cast into the crucible, and come out of the furnace with the dross purged away, and the pure metal alone left, which is polished until the hand that worked it into its present, perfect form can see his own face in its polished surface. And yet, not one atom of the pure metal is lost. So God will purify his children by the

fire of his judgment, but not one will he lose.

At the close of the sermon, the usual opportunity was given to confess Christ before men; and after a moment of painful suspense, Harry Washburne slowly rose and said:

"I intend to lead a different life. I can see now that Jesus loves me, even me." And then he sat down amid a hush, which was followed by singing the solemnly sweet hymn:

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that thy blood was shed for me,
And that thou bidst me come to thee,
Oh, Lamb of God, I come, I come!"

Harry was followed by others, and when the meeting closed, he went up to Mr. Thornton, and said earnestly:

"I don't understand it yet, and I don't know what I am to do; but I do know that I want to do right, and lead a better life."

"And God will surely help you," was the comforting reply. "But you must pray earnestly and faithfully."

Harry Washburne made a peculiar grimace, and said:

"I don't know how to pray, only as I have heard father and Elder Tomkins, and they always spend ten or fifteen minutes giving the Lord advice, and it always seemed to me that God knows how to attend his own affairs, without anybody's advice."

"Jesus told us how to pray, and he further

said: 'If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.' But we must always feel that we do not want anything unless God wants us to have it. We must learn to want God's will to be done in all things. Very often we may desire things that are not for our good; then, of course, God would not want us to have them; and he would see that it was best not to answer our prayer. Do you understand me?"

"Yes, I think I do."

Earle Thornton always talked to young converts in a very simple, straight-forward way, so that they could not fail to comprehend him. He continued:

"You want an understanding heart, no doubt. Then pray for one. Pray for faith. Pray for patience. Pray to be guided aright. And if you truly desire to be a Christian, you must follow wherever your Master leads, even down into the waters of baptism."

"I'm going to try, anyway," Harry thought, as he drove slowly homeward. "With God's help, I will try."

And he did try, and succeeded, and was baptized; and his father wondered how that very peculiarly talking evangelist could rouse Harry when he and Elder Tomkins had both failed. But he finally decided that it was his Universalism that did it; for Harry was such a great "softy" that he didn't want to be saved unless

he could bring all his companions along too. So he plainly told Harry one day not long after.

"Mr. Thornton is not a Universalist; neither am I. It is strange that you will not see the difference, father."

"There is no difference. You both believe in universal salvation, and that's the end of it. I never could endure a Universalist."

But Earle went on his way, preaching and teaching like his Master, and minding not when people called him a Universalist, and even smiling when told that the doctrine of "Baptism for the dead" was what the Mormons preached when they first located in Kirtland and built the church on the hill, ever since known as the Mormon Temple.

"I cannot afford to reject a Bible truth," he said, "even if it was advocated years ago by the Mormons."

It seemed very strange to Mr. Thornton in all these days that he could neither see nor hear of Leone. He knew that she was still searching for Leslie, and that she would never give up until she found some trace of the missing girl. But where was she? Leslie, Celeste and Leone seemed to have disappeared as effectually as if swept from the face of the earth. In all his travels, he neither saw nor heard of any of them. And at last he found himself en route for New York, to fill several appointments in

that State; but he stopped off at Cleveland for a few days, to visit some friends and relatives in the beautiful Forest City. He had been there before, but never had such feelings of admiration as now; for the last time he stopped here, he was looking for poor Leslie, and consequently did not visit the East End.



CHAPTER XIX.

EARLE AND LEONE.

WHY he did it, Earle Thornton could not have explained; but he could not resist the impression to go into that mission-school, and so he went. And there in the farther corner of the building, with a flock of forlorn looking children about her, sat Leone, patiently teaching and explaining the lesson. She was dressed simply and modestly in black. He asked the superintendent, who came up to him and began talking pleasantly:

"How long has the young lady in black been teaching here?"

Mr. Horton looked across at Leone and answered thoughtfully:

"A long time—several months, at least. Do you know her?"

"Yes, I have that honor."

"She has promised to address the school after the lesson. She does so frequently. And that isn't all; I happen to know that Miss Trent is a

real working missionary, going about among people that some of our ladies would shudder to meet. But nothing ever molests her. I believe if God ever took care of any one, he takes care of Miss Trent. But perhaps you're a minister."

"Yes, I am."

"Oh, well, then, Miss Trent will be glad to give way to you today, I know. She can talk next Sabbath. It isn't every Sunday that we have a clergyman among us."

"By no means," Earle said. "I prefer to hear Miss Trent."

"Can't I prevail on you to take her place?"

"Certainly not."

And a few moments later, Leone was facing the school, and quietly and modestly, but forcibly telling them of Jesus, who lived and died for them.

In looking around, her eyes met Earle's. She stopped a moment, confused and unable to proceed; but after an effort, and an inward prayer, took up her theme and finished as though nothing had happened. And afterward, when the hands of the two were clasped most cordially, she said:

"It was unkind in you to take me unawares."

"Are you very much displeased?"

"Yes, and no," she said, with a faint blush, and an arch look from her expressive eyes. "If

I had known you were here, I should have insisted on your addressing the school."

"I knew you would, and that is the reason I did not make myself known. Your superintendent told me you were going to review the lesson and talk about it."

Leone made no reply, and Earle continued:

"May I walk home with you?"

"I shall be pleased, for I want to talk with you very much."

How quiet and composed she was, as though he were her grandfather, or younger brother, he thought, looking at her curiously, as he took her Bible and Gospel Hymn Book, and walked toward her lodgings.

"How long have you been here Leone?" he asked.

"Most of the time since I left grandfather's."

"And you came here to look for——"

"Leslie, yes," she returned in a quiet voice. And looking at her now, he could see how pale and thin she had grown in these months of watching and waiting without avail.

"I am afraid you are wearing yourself out," he said gravely.

"Oh, no!"

"Have you discovered anything?"

"Nothing."

They walked a few blocks more, in silence, and then Leone stopped,

"Here we are at home. Will you come in?" she said cheerfully, quite as if he was the most matter-of-fact acquaintance in the world,—almost *too* friendly and altogether too composed to suit his mood. He had much rather she had trembled or blushed, than to be so frank and outspoken; but she did neither. But he did not know how many ways a well-trained woman has of hiding her feelings, providing she has feelings to hide, which is not always the case.

"With your kind permission, yes."

And they went up a flight of stairs and entered a room that spoke in silent and eloquent language of Leone's presence. A few flowers, an organ and music, and plenty of books! She drew an easy chair forward for Earle, put up her books, took off her hat, gloves and wraps, and sat down in another rocker. "Just as though she were my grand aunt, or some other ancient female relative," Earle thought, this time, as Leone proceeded at once with the conversation broken on the street.

"I am sorry to say that I have never found any trace of Leslie, and yet I am sure she came to Cleveland."

"How long do you intend to continue this wearing search?"

"Until I find her; and it is not wearing. I told you that before, I think."

"But you have grown thin and pale, Leone."

She flashed him a quick look, and he saw that her eyes were full of unshed tears, but she said gravely:

"Perhaps! Some women grow thin with age."

"Let me see. You must be growing quite old."

She looked up. Their eyes met, and both laughed.

"You needn't tease me. I assure you I am getting quite sensitive about my age."

"Very likely. But to return, where have you looked for Leslie?

"*Everywhere!* God pity me, everywhere!"

"And still you will not give it up."

"Mr. Thornton, how can you ask? But I forget. You do not know that Leslie is—my—my—" And here she stopped breaking down utterly, and covering her face with her hands.

"Your *sister*," Earle finished for her. "Yes, I have known it all the time," he continued in a low voice, longing to take her in his arms and comfort her, but not daring to do it. She looked up suddenly through her tears, and springing forward, sank upon her knees by his side, with the words:

"How—how—Who told you?"

"Celeste wrote me the whole story."

"Oh—oh—oh!" she exclaimed, and her head sank down upon his knee, and she was sobbing piteously. It required all his self-command now

to sit there quietly and let her cry, but he did, only stroking her bowed head gently, and at last saying:

"There, sister mine, you have cried enough. Yes, poor Celeste wrote me the whole story, and from the moment I read it, you have been a dearer sister to me than ever."

And he gently lifted her up and placed her again in her chair, still stroking her hair, and letting his fingers wander idly through the curls over her forehead, as a brother might have done. And Leone, shivering and shrinking under his touch, thought now, for the first time, with a feeling of desolate pain:

"His sister! yes, *his sister!*"

But she looked up, after an inward struggle, and murmured:

"Then you know all about it, and that Celeste may be my—own—mother!"

"Yes, I know all about it,—all the doubts and fears; but I do not think Celeste is your mother."

"Why?"

"From an inward conviction, perhaps. I can give you no other reason now."

"Do you think the mystery will ever be solved?"

"Never, unless we can find Harper."

"Even then he might be obstinate."

"Possibly! but I am looking for him, nevertheless."

"You!"

"Yes. I mean to unravel this mystery, or help to do it. You did not think you were working alone, I hope."

"How was I to think otherwise, when I did not know? But I would rather find and save Leslie, than to solve the mystery of my birth."

"Leslie will be saved."

"Yes, I know; but I mean to save her now,—to snatch her from sin,—to bring her back. Oh! it is so much better to be saved in the present life, than to wait for the future,—so much better to be among the firstfruits of God's kingdom. If people would only realize this, Earle, there would be no waiting for that second chance, would there?"

"I hardly think there would. But as long as men choose darkness rather than light, they cannot know."

Here they were interrupted by a modest, little tap on the door, and opening it, Leone admitted a lady, of about her own age, who, with wide-open, astonished eyes, said:

"I came to inquire about the Sunday School, but I see you have company."

"Never mind, Cecile. It is Mr. Thornton, whom you have long wanted to see. Mrs. Stevens,—Mr. Thornton."

"Is this now, is it really?" Mrs. Stevens began, perching her head a little on one side, and looking at Earle with a strange mixture of interest and curiosity.

"Yes, it is really Mr. Thornton," Leone replied, laughingly. Then, turning to Earle, she explained: "I have talked of you so often, that Mrs. Stevens has been quite anxious to know you. She has a very poor opinion of ministers in general, and thinks you must be quite an anomaly."

"Why doesn't Mrs. Stevens like ministers in general?" Earle asked, returning Mrs. Stevens' look with interest.

That lady opened her blue-gray eyes to their utmost, and answered candidly:

"I don't believe in them. I think they preach for money and nothing else."

"Do you believe in the Bible?"

"Some of it I believe, and some I don't."

"Would you mind telling me some of the things that you believe, and some that you do not believe?"

"Well, then, I believe we should do good and live right; and if we do the best we can, I don't know what more we can do."

"And what don't you believe?"

"Oh, a good many things! I don't believe in baptism and the Lord's supper, and all that. Maybe it's because I do not understand them."

"I am willing to believe that it is. But do you want to understand them?"

"Well, no, I don't know as I do. Leone has explained them over and over, but it makes no impression on my mind," she answered, in her peculiar, quick, low voice, and then relapsing into silence, she looked steadily into the fire, as if forgetful of her whereabouts and her companions. And still looking at her curiously, Earle was not slow to read her double nature: superficial in many things, and yet capable of a depth and power of thought and comprehension that were sometimes quite astonishing. He had never met such a peculiar phrenological development before. It was this very peculiarity that made her stop in the midst of a conversation, and look intently at some object. She was struggling in her mind with some thought or question of import, and if she could not solve it, she would rouse herself with an impatient shake, or the words: "Pshaw! what's the use?" If she could catch the idea, she would utter it at once, as in the present instance. So she quickly asked:

"Don't you think it would be a good thing to have one great treasury, and everybody's means in it, and somebody to deal out our share when we wanted it?"

Both her auditors were not a little surprised. Earle was the first to recover and say:

"I confess I have had that thought, myself. Have you not, Leone!"

"No. Although I have read some such ideas, it does not look expedient to me."

"Not! Why not? if I may ask."

"I'm afraid it would make the idle and worthless much more idle and worthless than they are now."

"But if it were so, one common treasury," Mrs. Stevens continued, "it wouldn't be long before the capitalists would have it all back again, would it?"

"Not if it were rightly managed," Mr. Thornton returned.

"And if Christian Socialism abounded throughout the universe," Cecile continued.

"Have you been reading Carlyle?" Leone asked smilingly.

"Carlyle, who's he? Never heard of him before."

"What made you think of such a thing then? or have you read somebody else on Socialism?"

"No," Cecile returned, with a peculiar lifting of her brows that always denoted surprise. "I haven't read anything. I never thought of it before. It came to me while I sat here."

"And you favor the idea?" Earle asked.

"Yes, don't you?"–another peculiarity of hers, a straightforward way of returning a question and requiring an answer.

"I have not matured it enough in my mind to give an answer; but I am favorably inclined to Christian Communism, and I think the day is coming when it will be an established fact."

"Something like the Brooke farm project?" Leone asked.

"Something, perhaps."

"How was that?" Cecile inquired. "I never heard about it."

"Explain it, Leone, if you remember it well enough. I have nearly forgotten, although I know such a community existed once, with Mr. George Ripley and Dr. William N. Channing, as projectors."

"Yes," Leone continued, "the plan was to make it a literary community, supported by the work of its members, on a farm, which was the common property of all. They were all stockholders, some giving money, and others contributing labor. Many note-worthy persons in the literary world were members of the association, among them Nathaniel Hawthorne, Theodore Parker, Charles H. Dana, George William Curtis, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth P. Peabody, and others. It was organized in 1841 and known as the West Roxbury Community."

"In 1841! That was a long time ago," Cecile said. "Was that all? How did it end?"

"Like all such undertakings, I believe," Leone replied a little curtly. "The account reads,

that they embraced the doctrines of Fourier, and tried to propagate their ideas throughout the United States, but it was finally broken up in 1847."

Cecile yawned, under cover of her handkerchief, and, excusing herself, left the room. Leone, looking steadily at Earle, said:

"It is a very proper thing for Cecile to advocate the idea of a common property, if she likes. I am too poor; I have too little to give. When the poor advocate such a doctrine, the world naturally thinks it is their own advancement they are looking after. The world is extremely cruel to the poor, you know, Earle."

"Yes, and perhaps you think because I am poor I ought not to accept this doctrine."

"You will lay yourself open to censure if you do, especially if you advocate it."

"No more than in my other religious views."

"Perhaps not."

"Truth is truth whether held by the poor or the rich, and both classes might obtain benefits by the change; and one should always be honest, and stand up for his convictions, you know."

"Yes, I know."

"But why is it better for your friend than for you to advocate such an idea? Is she rich?"

"Yes, Cecile is quite wealthy. She is what is styled a rich young widow."

Leone's voice did not falter, nor her eyes drop, as she made this statement, looking at Earle. He smiled, and she did not know that he had read her thoughts, concerning the enhanced attractions of the rich young widow; that he knew how unjust and unkind it was, to suspect him of monetary designs, or that a woman's worth would increase in his eyes in proportion to her wealth. He answered kindly:

"She is not the first person of property whom I have heard talk in this way."

"Indeed, I should think it would be the reverse."

"It is not, however. People of culture and refinement, possessed of kind hearts, regard money only for the good it can do. All they desire is enough for their own needs, and they are perfectly willing that others should have the residue."

"And yet, how many people of culture and refinement we see who do *not* possess this spirit. I'm afraid, brother, you are too enthusiastic."

"Then their culture and refinement are not based on the Christian spirit," was the quiet reply, and Leone answered gaily:

"Worsted, as I always am in an argument with you. You will have the last word and the best one."

"And yet I had much rather you should have the best of everything, Leone."

"I know you were always kind, too kind," she replied hastily. "I do not deserve it. I am proud, willful, and quick. Not a moment ago, I was thinking that you were like all the rest of the world, after money, and worshiping its representatives."

"Do you think so now, Leone?"

"No. But I have reason to have little faith in the world, you see. Before papa died, I was Miss Trent, 'you know,' Now, I am plain and poor Leone Trent, who has to work for a living, and am treated accordingly."

"You feel this keenly, sister."

"Yes, I do."

"You said you work for a living. I forgot to ask you what you are doing."

"Copying, mostly."

"Is it remunerative?"

"Not very."

"But I thought there were a few hundreds left. I am sure Mr. Carrington told me so."

Leone blushed vividly, whether at the mention of the few hundreds, or Walter Carrington's name, Earle could not determine, and as she seemed desirous of changing the subject of conversation, he soon bade her goodbye, and went his way.

CHAPTER XX.

THE DINNER PARTY.

THE next morning Earle called with an invitation for Leone, and also for Mrs. Cecile Stevens, to a simple dinner party, given by Mrs. Kirby, of No. — —— St., in honor of her friend Earle Thornton.

"You must not refuse," he said persuasively. "I leave town tomorrow, and I would like you and the Kirbys to become acquainted."

"I will not refuse," Leone replied; "and I think Cecile will also come."

After Earle had gone, the great question of what to wear presented itself to her mind. The Kirbys were wealthy and influential, and lived in an elegant house on a fashionable street. She must not present herself there in shabby, genteel attire. She must not mortify Earle, who looked on her and spoke of her as his friend, and had procured this invitation for herself and Cecile. She selected a plain, black silk, relict of her old wardrobe, but which she had kept in

good repair, and made over, so that it must be an experienced eye indeed, that could tell it from new. She knew that Mrs. Stevens would be resplendent in silks and jewels. Her taste was correct, though expensive; but Leone was neither envious nor covetous. She was always glad to know that her friends had means with which to indulge their taste.

But when they entered Mrs. Kirby's parlors at the appointed hour, Earle noticed with a thrill of pride, that Leone, in her plain, elegant attire, was far more prepossessing than any other lady present. The party consisted simply of Mrs. Kirby and her son, Austin, and her two daughters, Annie and Marcia, Mr. William Walden, Marcia's affianced,—for though she was the younger, she was soon to be married, —Mr. Darlington, Mrs. Kirby's bachelor brother, Mr. and Mrs. Stanton, intimate friends of the family, and Mr. Lawrence, a minister of the gospel, who, although he could not agree with Earle, yet was a staunch friend of the young evangelist, and always met him whenever he could. These, with our three friends, Cecile, Leone and Earle, made up a pleasant little gathering.

When dinner was announced, Mr. Austin Kirby, as host, offered his arm to Leone,—"as the greatest stranger, I suppose," thought Leone, "surely not the most distinguished guest,"

—and was followed by Earle and Mrs. Kirby, with the others in the order that Mrs. Kirby as an attentive hostess, had assigned. Mr. Darlington and Cecile, Mr. and Mrs. Stanton, Mr. Lawrence and Annie, and Mr. Walden and Marcia.

The dining-room was brilliantly lighted with its sparkling gas-jets. The table was rich in silver, cut glass and flowers. It was no long-projected entertainment, but one gotten up on the spur of the moment, in honor of their friend Earle, and like all such, passed off delightfully. The conversation soon became general and turned upon Mental Science, misnamed Christian Science.

"I object to that name," Earle said gravely, "for if I understand it aright, it is really mental science,—the triumph in some instances of mind over matter."

"In *some* instances! Don't you think in *all* instances?" Mrs. Stanton asked, for she was engaged heart and soul in the belief.

"Certainly not. We have too many authentic accounts of failures for any one to believe that."

"To be sure, failures occur sometimes, but it is always through the heedlessness of the patient."

"But if it were real Christian science." Mr.

Lawrence affirmed, "there need be no failures. Christ never experienced any, I believe."

"But why is Mental Science a better cognomen?" Mr. Stanton asked.

"Because it is in reality nothing but the power of mind over matter. You say, I am not sick. I never have been sick. This thing that I call pain does not exist. You simply affirm or deny," Mr. Lawrence returned, and Mrs. Kirby in defense of her friend said:

"Yet the scientists have done a good deal of healing in this city as well as in others."

"Oh, certainly! but it has all been done by the power of will. They have assumed, perhaps, the power of Christ, but they have not, in so many words, called upon Jesus to aid, or prayed for the cure of a patient."

"Then you don't accept the doctrine?"

"Not at all."

"What do you think of the new social movement?" Mr. Kirby asked Leone, with a view of changing the subject, for he saw that Mr. Lawrence was getting a little excited over the discussion. Leone's eyes wandered across the table to Earle and farther down to Cecile, and with a half smile, she replied:

"I confess that as yet I think but very little of it. But I am always slow to accept anything."

A peculiar light flitted for a moment into

Earle's eyes. She was always slow to accept anything, but she ended at last by accepting. He wondered that he had not thought of that before. How many sad hours and dreary thoughts it might have saved him. Yet there were some things she did not accept. Probably he would be one of those things. And so he listened attentively to hear who would take up this new theme. And it was Mr. Lawrence, who said:

"I trust Miss Trent will learn to think better of it. Why! some of the greatest minds of our day are taking up the weapons in defense of Christian Socialism."

"Do you believe in the common treasury system?" Cecile asked quickly. That seemed to be the one idea she had thoroughly grasped and understood.

"Certainly, I, for one, do," Austin Kirby replied promptly; and Leone remembered that the Kirbys were quite wealthy, and yet they were ready to throw their thousands into the common fund.

"And I," said Mr. Lawrence. "I do not publicly announce these ideas, to be sure; but I do firmly believe that pure Christian Socialism will have a regenerating influence on society, that nothing else can ever bring about. What do think about it, Brother Thornton?"

"It certainly seems that great good might

come of it, if based on the Christian principle. Nothing of the kind can prosper unless founded on the Rock Christ Jesus."

"No doubt we will all agree to that. But you were going to speak, Miss Marcia; pardon me."

"Not at all. But it appears evident to me that Communism would undermine society at once."

"Why so, Miss Marcia?"

With a pretty pout, and a toss of her head, she replied:

"Mrs. O'Brian, the washer-woman, and every Chinese laundry-man, would expect invitations to balls, soirees, etc. We should be obliged to call on the stone-breakers and the beer-venders, or lose caste. I don't believe in it."

There was a general laugh, as no doubt Marcia intended there should be, in the midst of which the signal was given for retiring to the parlors again, and music was next in order.

"Miss Trent, sing something for us. You surely can, judging by your face, and in this, faces never deceive me," said Mrs. Kirby, earnestly.

There was a moment of irresolution on Leone's part, and then she went to the open piano and sang a pathetic little thing of her own composing: "Tender and True." As the refrain was sung for the last time,

"Tender and true, tender and true,
Come back to me, Harold, thou tender and true,"

and she turned away, she was stopped with an *encore*, and the words from Mr. Darlington:

"Not yet, Miss Trent, not yet. There must be more where that came from. Sing us at least one more." And considering a moment, she returned to the piano, and sang:

"I'll remember you, love, in my prayers."

As she sang:

"When the heavenly angels are guarding the good,
As God has ordained them to do,
In answer to prayer I have offered to him,
I know there's one watching o'er you.
And may that bright spirit be with you through life,
To guide you up heaven's bright stairs,
To meet with the one who has loved you so true,
And remembered you, love, in her prayers;"

she looked up to meet Earle's eyes, watching her intently. She turned away abruptly, and finished as though it had been an unwelcome interruption. But in that moment, Earle knew that Leone's heart had gone from her keeping. No woman ever sang either of these songs with such pathetic expression, unless she had loved, and suffered through that love. But who was it?

Miss Marcia rattled off some instrumental music, and Annie sang a solo, but Leone would not sing again, although pressed to do so.

"Then, if we're not to have any more music, let's have some more socialism," Mr. Darlington said, laughing in his good-natured way.

"Miss Marcia has put an effectual damper on socialism," Mr. Lawrence replied.

"Oh, don't mind me!" Marcia cried. "Should you ever bring it about, I can emigrate, you know. One must draw the line somewhere, and it seems to me it should be drawn at Mrs. O'Brian."

"Mrs. O'Brian would never trouble you," Annie said. "The homely old adage, that 'Birds of a feather flock together,' would apply here."

"Annie is quite right," Mr. Lawrence replied, in a voice and manner that showed that he agreed with her in more ways than one. "People whose tastes are similar will get together when they can. Christian Socialism would only perfect this desire. Now with the great distinction between capital and labor, which makes an immense gulf, every day widening and deepening, only the wealthy, and those with an assured position in society, are thought refined or cultured. But my duties as a clergyman have shown me that this is a mistake. Can you not agree with me, Mr. Thornton? You have traveled more, and have had a better opportunity to learn the truth or falsity of my statement."

"I quite agree with you," Earle replied, "and furthermore affirm, that some of the most snobbish, unrefined, and illiterate people,

have pushed themselves into the front ranks of society, under the guise of money. Gold is the *open sesame* to the doors of society, and though there are exceptions, yet there are few houses that do not extend the right hand of welcome and fellowship to the representatives of wealth, however vulgar they may be, and entirely exclude the refined and educated if cursed with poverty. This is a well-known fact, and it is even more prevalent in small towns than in cities. Now, if there were an equal distribution of wealth, no one could claim precedence for his or her money, but all would stand socially on their real merits."

"Well, if that difficult question were settled, another would surely be raised immediately, and that would be a distinction between culture and culture. Some would think they had the real Boston 'culchaw,' and that their neighbors all belonged to the Chicago stripe," said Mrs. Stevens, in her quick, decided way.

"Then, we that live in Cleveland could preserve a happy medium," Annie replied.

"Perhaps the difficulty suggested would not exist, as with the lowering of the walls of wealth and pride, there would be room for the development of a pure and true Socialism, where all, with similar tastes, fancies and feelings, would freely mingle. There would be no such thing as caste, then. The only question at issue

in society would be, as to a man's uprightness, honesty and morality. But, alas that it should be so! today, those virtues are often the last things taken into consideration, even if they are thought of at all," Mr. Lawrence said, very gravely.

Stealing a look at Earle, Leone could see that he thought even deeper than that, but for some reason, would not express his ideas.

"Surely you've something more to say Earle," Mrs. Kirby said wistfully; and it was plain to be seen that whatever she said or thought of Mr. Lawrence, he held the second place in her estimation, and the happiest day of her life would have been, the day that Earle Thornton declared his love for one of her daughters. But she had long felt that that day would never come, and tonight she knew why. But Earle smilingly assured her he had nothing to say at present, not until he studied deeper upon this subject. And soon after, with many good wishes and friendly feelings the company broke up. Mrs. Kirby's carriage was to take Cecile and Leone, and looking at Earle, she said:

"Shall we send Austin, or do you prefer to go?"

"I will go," was the reply, and he hastened into the hall to put on his hat and gloves, and

stood ready when the ladies came down, escorted by Annie.

Very little was said on the homeward drive. An unusual silence had fallen upon the three. But at the door of their lodgings, Cecile said, "good night" at once, and went up to her rooms. Leone lingered a moment, with a friendly hand-clasp; but there was no other feeling in the hand she gave him on this eve of a separation that might be forever, and Earle turned away with a choking sense of disappointment in his heart.



CHAPTER XXI.

A TERRIBLE TEMPTATION.

IT had been what is called an open winter, very little snow and freezing weather, but with plenty of mud and rain however,—the winter of '88 and '89, as everybody in Ohio will remember, although not nearly so mild nor so muddy as '89 and '90. But spring had come at last, and the flowers were springing into bloom on a thousand hills, and nature, smiling, seemed to forget that winter ever existed in any form.

Mrs. Norris laid down her book with a sigh and a shudder. "Almost a Priest" had been almost too much for her nervous sensibility. The imminent danger that threatened Philip and Viola had worked upon her in a very peculiar way. "How terrible it would be, if my boy or my girl should ever fall under the influence of Catholicism," she thought. And going into a neat little sewing-room, where a pale, quiet girl sat at work, she said:

"I have just finished that book, Miss Moss, and I certainly don't want to read another one in the same strain."

"Was it so unpleasant?" Miss Moss asked gravely.

"To me, yes. But you look tired. Put down your work, and go for a walk; do."

"You are very kind Mrs. Norris, but I had rather not."

"Rather not! How strange you are, Miss Moss. Do you never get tired?"

"Oh, yes, sometimes!"

"Well, I wish you would run down to Early's for me, and bring me two dozen assorted silks. My crazy-quilt will never be finished, at this rate. Will you go?"

"Certainly, if you wish it." And Miss Moss arose obediently, and went to her room to make her toilet for the street, half-suspecting that the commission was a device of Mrs. Norris' kind heart to get her out into the air. On going down the street, she looked neither to the right nor the left, but became strangely conscious that she was being followed; and with her heart-beats increasing in rapidity at every step, she almost rushed into the store and up to the notion counter. After a few moments, she felt relieved, to think the door did not open to admit anyone else. Having made her purchases, she returned to the street, possessed with a

nameless dread. There he stood by the door, waiting for her to come out. Certainly he was not a man calculated to inspire dread or fear in the female heart. He was neither old nor ugly, but young and prepossessing, and the very last man on earth that a woman need to be afraid of——Earle Thornton. But this woman was terribly afraid of him. She turned paler than before, and lifted her hand unsteadily to draw her veil closer, but it was too late. Earle had taken her hand already, and said:

"Leslie! Have I found you at last? and is poor Leone's long search ended?"

Leslie, for she it was, trembled in every nerve, but managed to gasp: "Leone! has Leone looked for me?"

"Ever since you went away. It was very cruel in you, Leslie!"

She snatched her hand away impatiently and cried: "Leone, always Leone! You seem to think no one has suffered but Leone!"

"My poor girl, I think no such thing. Have you nothing to say to me, Leslie?" Earle continued in his earnest voice; and after a moment of bitter reflection, Leslie answered:

"Yes. Come home with me and you will hear my story."

The walk back to Mrs. Norris' was silent indeed. Earle asked her no question, and Leslie

made no remark. She conducted Earle straight into Mrs. Norris' sitting-room, and said:

"I got your silk, Mrs. Norris, and I found an old friend of whom I told you, Mr. Thornton. The time has come for me to tell my story."

"Not to me, if you had rather not," Mrs. Norris hastened to say. "I can trust you, Miss Moss."

But Leslie colored, and said sharply: "Not when you know I have deceived you even in the matter of my name."

"I have suspected as much all the time."

"And still trusted me. You are too good. But I am going to tell Mr. Thornton, and I want you to hear my story."

And with a dead, calm composure, that was dreadful in one so young, Leslie placed chairs for her auditors, and sat down, while Earle said:

"You need tell me nothing, only how you came to be in Johnstown, that I may send word to Leone."

Leslie's lips quivered a little, but she said: "I am going to tell it all. There is but one thing of which I am ashamed, and that is leaving Lakeside as I did. But before I say one word, I affirm, before God, that I am as pure and true as in the old days of our first acquaintance."

"Thank God for that, Leslie," was the reverent reply.

And Leslie settled back in her chair, and told the story which we shall append in language of our own.

She stood in the little hall that day, nearly frozen, and heard Celeste's story to Leone. It roused a train of painful and bitter thoughts in her mind, and she believed that she, instead of Leone, was Bernard Trent's legitimate daughter.

She told her story to Fred, after he coaxed and demanded it as his right, and he coolly consoled her with the words that no doubt she was right, but she could never prove her birth, now that Harper was lost. She would always have to be called Leslie Lascelles, for no one would ever want to marry her with a cloud hanging over her birth. And poor Leslie thought about it night and day, and grew moody and morose, and Fred counseled and cautioned, and half-crazed with despair and horror she listened. And all the while, she could hear the hymn that they sang in Sabbath-school, only the last Sunday of her attendance:

"Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin;"

and it seemed to her morbid fancy, that she could always hear Leone's voice, more distinctly than any other, and in her unreasoning mood, it angered her accordingly. Leone would be no better than herself, she knew, un-

der the same circumstances and temptations. Leone was no more perfect than other girls. And then Fred promised to interest himself wholly in her affairs. He had money and he would use it to prove her birth. He would search the world over, but what he would find Harper and make him confess. And then he would marry her. She should be his wife, as soon as the truth was reached. All she had to do now, was to go away with him quietly, and the world would never know the difference.

She wavered for weeks and weeks, and would not confide in Leone, and loathed the sight of Celeste. She tried to persuade herself that it was right, particularly as Fred said that love sanctified all things, and never once in that time did she stop to think about Celeste's similar temptation, and that the counsel of a bad man had at last prevailed over a weak and vacillating woman, which would cause everlasting remorse, and leave a scar upon her soul that time could never wholly obliterate, a stain that could never be washed entirely white. Tears of contrition and repentance can never, never do away with the marks of that which once has been.

She did not think of that. She only thought of getting away from her present shame, the bearing of her mother's maiden name, and being pointed out as an illegitimate child; for

Harper would undoubtedly wreak his vengeance to its utmost. At last she consented to go to Cleveland on a certain day, and meet Fred there. He would go early in the morning; she would go down on No 12 As train-time drew near, she dressed herself hastily, and took all her jewels. She had no money. Fred had furnished her with enough to pay her fare to the city. And it was this lack of money, and their terrible staring poverty of late, that had helped her in her decision. She could get nothing to do; neither could Celeste. Many a time they had fasted all day, in a city full of plenty. But both were too proud to beg for anything but work, and that being denied, what could she do but starve, or—go--with Fred Barstow? She was weak. She was afraid of starvation, of poverty and want. Fred would at least take care of her. Girls had sold themselves for homes before, even when the sale was solemnized by a minister of the Gospel. This could be no worse, with love to sanction it, and she did love Fred, and was sure that he loved her. She never stopped to think that girls, hopeless and helpless, had been, through fear and weakness, driven to this step before, and after a few short months, at most, been cast aside to sink to the level of the lowest, and die in the gutter at last. If she had thought, it would have made no difference, she had such firm and abiding faith in

Fred. She hastened down to the station, and boarded the train nervously, and took a seat in the rear car, from which she plainly saw the commotion on the platform, as Leone rushed forward, unmindful of life or limb, only intent upon one thing: to rescue her.

It came home to her in one awful moment of time. The girl whom she had hated and despised, during these last weeks, her sister, had periled her life to save another's honor. With a shudder, she cowered down in her seat and hid her face in her hands. She could see it all now, the terrible gulf yawning at her feet, ready to draw her into its dark and crime-stained waters. What should she do? What could she do? She could not meet Fred, or all was lost, and lost forever. It never occurred to her that she could get off at a way station and go back. She could not have gone back if she had thought, for she had no money. Fred had been careful not to give her any more than the price of her ticket, and even if he had, she now felt that she could not have used it. She had no right to touch Fred Barstow's money.

And all this time they were drawing near the city, and Fred was to meet her in the Union depot. A thought suddenly rushed into her mind, which gave her new life and hope. This train stopped at the N. Y. P. & O. depot. She

would get off there. And so she did, thanking God that she was saved, *saved*, SAVED.

But what could she do? She did not know the way into the city from this point, and even if she did, what could she do? She had no money, and no friends. And there is no earthly thing more doleful than that. Alone in a strange city without money and friends! She looked around on the crowd waiting for the New York and Pennsylvania train, and a neatly dressed lady, evidently travelling alone, and trying to keep two children in sight and out of danger, attracted her attention. She might as well stay here as to wander away in the city, and so she went to the little boy, and coaxed him to stay with her until the train came. The lady looked at her, and on the impulse of the moment, said:

"Are you going east, Madam?"

"No, I am going no farther," Leslie said.

"Oh, I wish you were. I've had such a time with Johnnie." Leslie said nothing, and the lady continued: "I wish I could get some one to go with me."

"Would I do?" Leslie gasped, feeling ready to faint with the fear that she might not do. "Where do you live?"

"In the Conemaugh Valley, in Johnstown, Pennsylvania. But what made you ask if you would do?"

"Because I—I—I—Oh, heaven!" Leslie gasped, "I have had a terrible temptation, and got off here to avoid some one that expected me to meet him in the city. But I'd rather die than see him now. I have no money, no friends, nowhere to go. Let me go with you, and I will do anything in return. Quick, quick, the train is ready."

Leslie delivered these words in a rapid undertone, and stood, pale as marble, with her hands clenched, before the astonished woman, who, with only one thought in her mind, that here might be an opportunity to save an innocent girl from a living death, said:

"Follow me, with Johnnie." And with a great sense of relief, Leslie followed.

Mrs. Norris, for she it was, did not, in the hurry of the moment, consider the rashness and possible danger of this step, but after they were well-settled, and she had time to think, she said:

"You may go home with me, and if you prove worthy, you may stay with me." Leslie bowed, her tears falling fast, and the lady continued: "What may I call you?"

"Moss—Miss Moss," Leslie answered at random. And though the lady felt sure she had given an assumed name, she did not question her motive. From that day, she had lived in the family of Mrs. Norris, proving herself a

faithful friend and companion, and never, until now, had that lady heard her story, She rose, and clasping Leslie in her arms, exclaimed:

"My poor, poor Leslie! You were most sadly tempted, and surely Mr. Thornton will agree with me."

But Earle said nothing. Another and terrible phase of the social question had shown itself to him, namely: the fall of woman through want and fear. At last he knelt down, and, in a low voice, thanked God for his marvelous power in dealing with this sorely-tried, and almost lost girl. And he prayed that they might have grace to deal with trial and temptation, and to triumph over evil. Afterward, he said to Leslie:

"You are surely willing that I should acquaint Leone as to your present abode?"

"Yes, it is quite right."

"Right! why," cried Mrs. Norris, "she's the noblest girl I ever heard of."

Leslie was crying,—breaking down completely, and yearning in that moment for Leone and her pardon.

"To think," continued Mrs. Norris, "how she braved danger, and even death, to save you. But how did she know you were on the train?"

Then Earle had to tell his part of the story, and his share in it, and how Leone was in Cleveland now, working, watching and waiting for

Leslie, sure that she would come back sometime and need a home.

"And would she take me in, feeling, as she does, that I am a lost and sinful soul!" Leslie cried in agony.

"Certainly she would. Leone is a Christian."

"And I have been so hard and bitter and unkind in thought and feeling. Oh, Mr. Thornton, write and tell her all about it, and that I was not quite lost, but saved by the grace of God." But Earle went out at once, and telegraphed to Leone.

"Look no farther. She is found. All is well. Will write.
EARLE THORNTON."

And that night, after the service he held in the doomed city of Johnstown, he wrote Leone a long letter, telling her of Leslie and how he came to find her. And the next morning, on his way to the office, whom should he meet face to face but Celeste.



CHAPTER XXII.

HOPE FOR THE WORLD.

CELESTE had grown old long, long before her time,—old with sorrow and remorse. She was but little past forty, but looked as women of sixty should not look. She stopped dead still, and gazed at Earle when they met, without so much as a quiver of the eyelids, until he reached out his hand, and taking hers, said: "Celeste, how is it that we meet here? I had lost all trace of you, but I am very glad to find you again."

Then indeed the eyelids trembled, the lips quivered, the pale face flushed a little, under his earnest gaze, and Celeste said in a low, constrained voice: "You take my hand, and are glad to meet me, and you know my past."

"Am I better than my Elder Brother, who forgave you long ago?"

"But *she* does not," Celeste replied bitterly.

"Whom? Leslie?"

"Ah! *mon frere*, I know not where Leslie be!

I look for Leslie day and night. I vair much fear Leslie lost, lost! Oh, *Mon Diere!* not Leslie, but the other one, Leone. She not forgive!"

Celeste was becoming excited, as her mixed French and English testified, and Earle turned and walked with her, saying in a soothing voice: "Leone will in time. I have good news for you. Leslie is found."

"Where? where?"

"Here in Johnstown."

"*Serait il possible!*"

"It is true. Leslie is here in Johnstown; and better than all the rest, our poor Leslie has lived a good life. She has been suspected wrongfully. She is an innocent girl, and her greatest sin was running away from home."

"Oh, Lord, I thank thee!" Celeste murmured in a low voice, while the tears ran freely down her wasted cheeks, and she drew her veil, to hide her emotion from curious eyes. "Oh, Lord, forgive me for thinking one unkind thought of Leslie!"

"How long have you been here? How did you happen to come?" Earle asked, forgetting that he was assuming a woman's privilege, in asking two questions at once.

"I have been here more than a week, and came through this means," Celeste replied, handing a crumpled note to Earle, who looked at it eagerly.

"You had better go to Johnstown, Pa., at once."

"It is Harper's writing" Celeste explained, simply, as she put it back into her pocket. "I dare not disobey Harper, for fear of something worse, and so came to Johnstown, and am already employed in a family, as nurse to a young lady, who is recovering from a serious illness. But where is Leslie?"

"She is living with Mrs. Norris, a most estimable lady."

"Do you think she would see me?" And Celeste's nervousness became again apparent, and her lips were quivering piteously.

"No doubt she will," Earle replied calmly, for in his own heart there was nothing but compassion for Celeste. He knew that she had sinned; but had she not suffered? and was she not repentant and forgiven of him who said, "Go and sin no more?" And in this poor, weak, trembling woman he saw today what he had never seen before, the slow but sure approach of the death angel. He realized that Celeste had but little longer to live. Her life of late had been too hard, too nervous, too bitter, too trying in every way for one of her years. In the days when she should have had kindness, rest and quiet, she had neither. There had been nothing but one long strain of wretchedness and misery, and the effect of this pitiful cause was near. And in his heart Earle determined

that Leslie should both see and forgive Celeste. "I will see you again this evening," he said, in a quiet voice, as he parted with her, " and will arrange for Leslie to see you too."

Ah! how little did either know what the evening would bring forth, and that the shadow of death hung dark and drear over the doomed Conemaugh valley. The city was already washed with the long rain. The clouds seemed to lower more and more threateningly. But Earle, accustomed to being out in all kinds of weather, and always armed with his rubber coat, did not mind, but rather liked it. And if one is well protected, there is something really attractive in a wet walk.

The dinner hour was near, and so Earle repaired to Mrs. Marvel's, where he was stopping, before seeking Leslie; for housekeepers do not want their guests to keep their dinner waiting, and Mr. Thornton was well aware of this fact. Mrs. Marvel met him smilingly.

"You have had a wet walk today," she said.

"Rather. But I always make a point of going out every day, let the weather be what it will."

"A very good plan, certainly. But I never can impress its value on Willie's mind."

Willie looked up with a half smile. Student and inertia were written all over his face and

in his dreamy eyes. He was nearly twenty, and not yet out of school.

"What are you studying today, Willie?" Earle asked kindly, as he paused by the young student's chair. And for answer Willie handed him the book. It was rather an old one,—"Foreshadows," by the Rev. John Cumming, D. D. But he was studying it up, in reference with others; for this ambitious boy meant to be a minister, and as he often said, "wanted to teach the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." But he often said, shaking his head wisely:

"Thornton is mistaken, and so are all his followers. It is plain, as plain can be, that but a remnant can be saved."

"Then you surely have no hope for John or Ida, his mother said; for sturdy John was a little wild, and didn't believe in much of anything, and Ida, two years Willie's senior, was a society belle, who professed to believe in no religion, but humanity. Both were kind and tender-hearted, and Willie loved them dearly, and with a pained expression on his face, he answered:

"I never forget Ida and John for a moment, but pray unceasingly that the Lord will forgive them and receive them in his kingdom, and somehow I always feel comforted and believe that he will."

And it must be confessed that Willie felt in

his heart that God would save them because they were *his* brother and sister:—not unlike many other good people, who are perfectly willing that somebody else should be lost, but quite sure that their own will be saved.

"You see, Thornton," he said with a half-smile, as he laid his book on the table, "I can't see any warrant in the Scriptures for a state of future probation."

"You believe in future judgment, or trial, and that is probation. But what do think of the preaching to the 'spirits in prison?'"

"I know that after Christ was put to death in the flesh and quickened by the Spirit, it is said that he preached to the spirits in prison, who had been disobedient in the days of Noah. But it does not say that he preached to all, nor that any accepted the message."

"Peter plainly shows that the gospel was preached to the dead, that they might be judged like men in the flesh; and this certainly proves that some at least have an opportunity of salvation after death. And if a man has left this world, without any faith in our Lord, and descended into the darkness of Hades, to be tormented with devils, and to know that it is a deserved punishment for the hardness of his heart, and his sinful state; and when the great light comes, which heralds Christ's presence, and he knows it is Jesus, who

loves him, who is compassionately giving him light and opportunity, and will not rest until he is saved; and that this love causes the Lord to go down to the very gates of hell to reach for his soul, do you think that man will then turn away and be lost?"

"Not if he has such a chance, but there is reason to fear that he will not have it," Willie replied candidly; and then his father observed:

"Well, it is to be hoped he will have such a chance, if chance it should be called; it seems to me more like the simple and certain execution of the purpose of God. Certainly, if the reins were in my hands, my children would have chances as long as they needed mercy, and that an earthly father's love would prompt this is my strongest reason for believing that our Heavenly Father will always have mercy. The Bible says that God is love, and that his mercy endureth forever; but if he does not always extend mercy to his children, then he is not as merciful as man."

Not long since, a Baptist minister read a paper before the regular Monday Conference of ministers in a certain city, an inquiry as to whether the Bible teaches the doctrine of probation after death. And he urged it as his opinion that "The strongest evidence, if evidence it be, of the final restoration of all men to hap-

piness, is found in the refusal to believe that our dearest loved are forever lost."

But that, however much it may weigh, is not the most satisfactory evidence. What is based merely on our desires, can be nothing. The real evidence in this case is the life, teaching, and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, to say nothing of the teaching of the prophets, and the preaching of Paul and the other Apostles, who give nothing but light and hope to a troubled world.

Now, however, Willie made direct answer to his father: "The reason you feel so, father, is because you have such a good, kind and tender heart."

"My son, do you not think your Heavenly Father's heart is as good and kind as your earthly father's?"

Willie dropped his head without a word, and was glad to hear the summons to dinner. He felt that he was being cornered with his own argument. Mrs. Marvel took it up at once:

"Somehow, I never felt more like talking on this subject than today. But how very dark it is, and how it does rain!"

"Quite like the flood," irreverent John exclaimed. "Maybe we'll need to have an ark. What do you think, Will?"

"That you are the most hair-brained fellow I ever knew."

John winked at Ida and prepared for another sally, but his mother interfered by asking:

"Do you think, Brother Thornton, that the spirits in prison mean the unsaved, those who have gone from this world unconverted?"

"I do. There seems to be room for no other meaning to that passage, which gives hope to so many."

Just then a messenger entered, in breathless haste, saying: "Word has been sent down from Lake Conemaugh that the dam is unsafe, and may burst at any time."

But little apparent heed was given to this warning, anywhere in the valley. Such warnings had been given them before, and many felt that there was no danger. But Mrs. Marvel looked anxiously around on her family, and said: "Do you think there is any danger, pa?"

"Yes, there is danger. There is always danger as long as that dam remains in its present condition. They say that fifty years ago it burst, and let the water down the valley, but as there were very few inhabitants here then, it did but little damage."

And so the broken conversation was again resumed, and after dinner, Earle announced his intention of going out again.

"Are you going out again before evening meeting," Ida asked.

"Yes. I have an appointment to keep before the services."

"With a lady, I'll wager," said John, gaily.

"Yes, it is with a lady,—two of them, in fact," Earle replied gravely. And buttoning on his rubber-coat once more, stepped out into the rain. At the door, he turned back with a curious feeling in his heart that he could not define.

"I feel impelled to say goodbye," he said with a half-laugh.

Ida's eyes were full of tears as she gave her hand, saying in a low voice: "I have felt so all the time. Goodbye, Earle."

"Of course, you're coming back," Mrs. Marvel said anxiously. "I wouldn't let you go if I thought you weren't."

"I intend to return," Earle replied, looking away because of something he for the first time saw in Ida's eyes. She was frivolous, careless, and a society belle, but, nevertheless, she had enthroned Earle Thornton as her king. A great wave of pity for Ida made him turn at the gate. She was looking at him through the window, and, smiling, waved her hand. He lifted his hat and stood a moment bare-headed in the rain, bowed, and turned down the street. It was the last time. Never again will they meet in this lower world.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AN AWFUL NIGHT.

"IT is going to be a miserable evening, but I have decided to go and hear your Mr. Thornton, Leslie," Mrs. Norris said, dropping the Miss Moss quite naturally, and as naturally taking up the Leslie.

"I shall be glad of your company," Leslie said, looking up from her sewing,—a pretty white dress for Nellie. Johnnie and Nellie were Mrs. Norris' only children. Her husband had died since Leslie came among them.

"Put down your sewing; do. It isn't necessary for you to work every minute."

"I want Nellie to have her white dress for Sunday."

"If it keeps on raining, Nellie won't need her white dress."

Johnnie came rushing in from the street, where he had been sailing about in the gutters, and cried out: "Mother, mother! they say the dam of the lake is going to burst."

"God forbid!" cried the mother; for every-one in that doomed valley, old and young, knew what it meant, if the dam of Conemaugh lake should burst.

"But it will. I know it will." And seven year-old Johnnie stood with his little nose flattened against the window-pane, looking anxiously up the street.

"How do you know it will?" Leslie asked, a tremor of fear thrilling her own heart; for since her residence here, she had heard enough of the danger to realize it, partially, at least.

"Cause I do. I feel so 'twould."

"It isn't best to borrow trouble," Mrs. Norris said.

"Can't we run to the hills, mamma? I wish you would, you and Leslie and Nellie."

"What would you do?"

"I'm a man, and mans always face danger, don't they?"

"Perhaps!"

"Here comes Mr. Earle," Johnnie continued, as the dripping figure came down the street and up to the door. "I'm goin' to let him in."

"No, I am," Nellie cried, racing after her brother. And thus both children were at the door to greet Earle, when Mary, the kitchen maid, opened it in answer to Earle's ring. They were very officious in helping him off with his wet garments; for yesterday's visit had made

him a favorite with the children; and then they led him triumphantly into the parlor.

After the first greetings, Mrs. Norris asked, a little anxiously: "Have you heard anything about the weakness of the dam, and that there is danger."

"Such is the report."

"I should think people would act upon it, then," Leslie exclaimed anxiously.

"They would if they anticipated any danger. We have had false alarms before. We have rushed to the hills when there was no need of it."

"Do you think there is danger, Earle?" Leslie asked faintly.

"I am too much of a stranger to judge. I came to see you on a very important subject, Leslie."

"What?"

"Johnnie, you and Nellie can go and play in the garret," Mrs. Norris observed quietly. "Mr. Thornton and Leslie have some business to talk over."

With disappointed looks upon their little faces, the children, who had learned to obey without question, started for the garret. Mrs. Norris also arose.

"You need not go," Leslie exclaimed. "Mr. Thornton has nothing to tell me that you cannot hear."

"Certainly not," Earle returned. Then looking directly at Leslie, he continued: "Leslie I met your mother this morning."

Leslie's hands trembled in her lap, and were clinched and unclinched; but she exclaimed in cold disdain: "My mother!"

"Certainly you know whom I mean: Celeste."

"Why do you not say Leone's mother?" Leslie asked sharply.

"Because I believe her to be yours."

"I do not, then. Evidence all points the other way. Have I not been persecuted, and Leone left to herself?" Leslie continued in a voice of triumph.

Earle was forced to admit this, but continued gently: "Whether she is or is not, you have always regarded her as such until lately. Celeste was kind to you and motherly; in memory of that past, will you not see her and be at least friendly?"

Leslie's hands were still clasping and unclasping. A hard resolute look had come into her face, and she said: "No, I will not."

"Why?"

"Because if I am Margaret Trent's daughter, as seems evident, Celeste wronged my mother most cruelly, and brought shame upon me. I will neither see her nor forgive her."

"Think a moment. What if Celeste should prove to be your own mother?"

Leslie writhed in the intolerable pain of the thought, but answered firmly: "It would make no difference. That would only be a double sense of shame to bear. I would not forgive her."

Verily poor Celeste was reaping the reward of her sins. One of these girls was her own daughter, but neither desired her, or could forgive her early sin. And sin always brings its own punishment, its own bitter reward.

"Am I to tell her this as your final decision?" Earle asked gently, feeling that compassion for the erring woman that both girls so bitterly denied her.

"That is all I have to say."

"Do you not desire to know where she is, and how she came here?"

"You may tell me if you like."

"She is living in Mr. Forrest's family, taking care of a daughter, who has been ill, of fever."

Leslie bowed coldly, but finally said: "It is very strange that she came here." For answer, Earle told her of the line Celeste had shown him.

"Ah, I see!" Leslie cried triumphantly. "It is more persecution from Harper."

"Leslie!" Mrs. Norris exclaimed, speaking for the first time, "Do you know it seems to me you ought to see this woman. You are growing hard, unwomanly and unchristian."

Leslie stole a look at Earle, and asked piteously: "Do you think so, that it is unwomanly and unchristian?".

"Yes," was the quiet reply.

Leslie began to cry. She did not want to be unwomanly and unchristian. But she had steeled her heart against Celeste, and she could not endure the thought of meeting her again. She looked up with a shiver, and said drearily:

"Maybe it is; but it is at least honest, and I cannot meet her,—not now anyway. When I think of my own temptation, it brings a horrible fear, that perhaps she is my mother. Oh, God! I'd rather die tonight!"

Ah, Leslie! Leslie! before that terrible night ended, you had reason to change your mind. Earle arose and went into the hall for his water-proof and hat, as it was getting late, and declining Mrs. Norris' kind invitation to stay to tea, he stepped out upon the street, once more. He gained the residence of Mr. Forrest, but was startled by the unusual commotion about him and the distant rushing and roaring of a mighty column of water. The truth broke upon his startled mind at once. The dam had burst. The Conemaugh lake was no longer a lake, but a madly rushing, roaring volume of water, seeking vengeance for its long and unnatural confinement.

No pen can portray that awful scene of death

and destruction, as the water came steadily down the hill, and through the narrow limits of the doomed valley. Here is what an eye-witness says:

"I stood on a hill near by, and saw the whole flood. I heard at first, a grinding noise far up the valley, and looking up, I saw a dark line, moving slowly toward me, and soon perceived that it was——*houses*. They came down the valley, like the immense hand of a giant, moving all before him. A beam, or log, would be tossed high in air and then fall back with a crash. It came steadily creeping down the valley, and across the poor, little mountain city. For ten minutes, I saw nothing but moving houses, and then the waters came with an awful rush and roar, which lasted for two hours, and then began to flow more steadily."

That memorable night of May 31st., 1889, can never be forgotten. It was only a little after five o'clock in the afternoon when the first alarm came, but as it had been raining heavily all day, the people thought that the rising waters only meant a slight flood, and they stood in the windows and doors to witness the spectacle, and did not try to save themselves, until it was too late.

A conductor on the east-bound day express said he saw what appeared like a wall of water, and warned the passengers. They had barely time to fly to the hills. Nearly all were saved.

The shrieks of fear and horror that went up from the doomed city, and all along the valley, were enough to congeal the blood in the veins of the stoutest.

In that moment, while Earle stood in irresolution, a thousand thoughts seemed to rush through his brain. He took one uncertain step forward, but was pulled back into the open door by a woman's hand, and looking round, he saw Celeste, with a woeful, white face, and colorless lips, twitching convulsively.

"It is coming," she said in a low voice. "It is death and destruction. I shall never see Leone nor Leslie, and shall never know the secret."

"The Lord doeth all things well, Celeste. If we were brought here to meet death, let us meet it bravely," Earle replied, taking her trembling hand, and clasping it warmly. "We are neither of us afraid to go into the eternal life."

There was a shriek of anguish in an adjoining room. "It is Miss Carrie!" Celeste said. "I must go to her." And Earle followed mechanically. There was nothing to do now but wait. Mr. and Mrs. Forrest and Carrie were in the parlor, as Celeste and Earle came in. The magnitude of the horror that threatened them had just been impressed on Carrie's mind, and she shrieked in mortal anguish and fear, and on seeing Earle, cried out:

"Are you a clergyman? You look like a minister. If you are a Christian, in heaven's name, pray, pray! I cannot! Mamma cannot! Papa never did!"

Earle looked at the mother, who was wringing her hands in abject misery; at the father, who was trembling like a leaf; at the invalid daughter, wasted by her late sickness, whose white hands were clasped appealingly towards him, and whose eyes were streaming with tears, as she wildly continued:

"Pray, pray! I am afraid to die, to go out in this awful way. We are all of us afraid! Pray for us, for our lost souls!"

And Earle went down on his knees, with this cry ringing in his ears, followed by Celeste and Carrie, and her parents, and he prayed that their souls might be received in the kingdom of God, if it was his will to take them tonight. But if it was according to the will of his heavenly Father, he prayed that the dreadful cup might pass away, and they might be spared for useful Christian lives. And then Carrie's trembling voice took up the petition.

"Oh, Lord, my Heavenly Father! if thou wilt hear and save us tonight, I will consecrate my life from henceforth to the service of Christ." And the father and the mother joined in that promise and that prayer, with a fervent, Amen.

And then came the crash! A roar and rush, and then a wrench, and the house was swept from its foundation, and turned and twisted, while it seemed a deluge of water poured over it, and crept in through every crevice. But

Carrie no longer cried out. She was silent now, though she had been stunned and bruised, and tossed about, until Celeste drew near her and steadied her in her arms.

"I am not afraid now," she whispered. "God is going to take care of us, and I mean to be a Christian."

No one else could hear, in that awful roar, which went steadily on and by; and they knew they had not been swept into the terrible line of death; but being a little out of the path, which that awful scythe had mown down, were saved.

But, oh, that night! Oh, the shrieks of anguish! and, oh, the moans and groans of the dying! The angry rush of the waters, that went steadily onward! The ceaseless down-pour of the rain that only added to the horror of the scene! More than once Earle thought of Leone, and wondered if he should see her again; and would she miss him if he should never come back. More than once he thought of the Marvels, especially of thoughtless Ida, and wondered what their fate would be, and then his thoughts went pitifully after Leslie. Would Leslie be lost in this great vortex of human woe? Lost with her heart still hardened toward Celeste! And then he looked at Celeste, through the gathering gloom, but the darkness was too dense to see her face, and he only knew that she was sup-

porting Carrie Forrest, and Carrie was praying.

Mr. and Mrs. Forrest clung together, near Carrie, but Earle was—alone. Alone, yet not alone! The unseen presence of his Heavenly Father and his Elder Brother was near, and he had never felt nearer the sustaining arms than in that awful hour of peril and desolation.

But, as for Leslie! When the horror first came home to her and Mrs. Norris, they looked at each other with blanched faces. The steady on-coming roar was heard in their ears, like the deadly approach of a mighty cyclone.

"What is it?" Leslie gasped, growing pale as the dead.

"It is water, and the dam of the Conemaugh lake has burst," Mrs. Norris returned. "May the Lord of heaven save us. Nothing else can." But a moment later, she cried wildly: "Where are the children?"

"In the garret. You remember you sent them there." And simultaneously they rushed for the garret. Halfway up the stairs they met Nellie, and Mrs. Norris caught her in her arms.

"Where is Johnnie?" she cried.

"At the window, watching the water. But I was afraid to stay."

Mrs. Norris caught Nellie and turned to go down, saying to Leslie: "Fetch Johnnie, for God's sake!"

Leslie rushed up the stairs in search of her

favorite, Johnnie, and reached him just as the terrible, on-coming, angry sea of water, houses and humanity, closed in with their abode, and with a despairing wail, knew that the worst had come. A vision of Celeste and Leone floated before her eyes, and she closed them, with a prayer for mercy, as Johnnie sprang into her arms.



CHAPTER XXIV.

A DREADFUL DAY.

THAT night, which to many a weary watcher, seemed an interminable night of woe, ended at last. The gray dawn of the early spring morning broke upon a scene of desolation that no pen can describe, and Saturday, June 1st, 1889, had come. It was a day of horror to more than one wretched soul, and was succeeded by another night of despair; and then Sunday morning dawned. Oh, such a Sabbath! The work of rescue was going steadily on, the victims of the flood being cared for; the dead laid in their dreadful lines for indentification; but darker than all lowering rain-clouds, the pall of death and horror hung over the doomed valley. The fire spread rapidly all day Sunday, and the walls of damaged houses were constantly falling, their crash resounding through the city, which was one vast funeral pyre; and everything combined to add to the horror of the already horrible scene. The work of rescue

went on, and, oh, that such things should be! so did the work of plunder.

Ohio had nobly responded to the cry of distress, which rang from end to end of the globe, and in the foremost ranks was gallant Cleveland, as Earle gladly learned as soon as he could learn anything. As soon as he could, he ventured out on the street, but all day Saturday was unable to learn anything of his friends. Saturday night, the walls of Mr. Forrest's house, which had been carried from its foundation, showed signs of weakening, and the family were afraid to remain any longer even in the poor shelter that it now afforded.

"We shall be obliged to find shelter elsewhere, or stay out of doors," Mr. Forrest said.

"You and Mr. Thornton go, papa, and take mamma immediately to some place of shelter, and then you can come back for Celeste and me," Carrie suggested, readily falling into Earle's way of saying Celeste, instead of the more formal Mrs. Boyd,—for poor Celeste still clung to this name, despite Harper's threats.

There seemed to be no other way, for Carrie was not strong enough to help herself, and Mrs. Forrest had grown weak and helpless in these hours of horror; and being a heavy woman, it was necessary for Earle to help her husband remove her to a safer haven. And so without any further delay, she was removed, and nurse and

patient left alone, for the servants had long since deserted them, acting on the principle that self-preservation is nature's first law.

Carrie, shivering and pale, from cold and weakness, but not from fear, lay back upon a half-ruined sofa, and looking at her nurse, said: "Good can come out of evil, can it not, Celeste?"

"Yes," the nurse replied in her low voice, "God can bring good out of evil."

"Yes, and he has brought good out of this great evil, inasmuch as he has made us all, papa, mamma, and me, to realize that there is a God. But God didn't bring this evil upon us, and no one has a right to say he did. It was the men that built that awful dam. Celeste, you don't think this is one of the judgments of God, do you?"

"No, indeed. People are too ready to lay man's wicked work to God, and say, 'God's will be done.'"

"When it isn't God's will at all, I see. But what was that,—that noise?"

For a moment, Celeste stood still, while the house shook and trembled, beneath and around them, and another grinding, crashing sound smote their ears. "God help us," she said, "the walls are giving way." Another moment of irresolution, and then Celeste had raised Carrie in her arms, and staggered to the door.

"Put me down! You are not strong enough! It will certainly kill you!" Carrie whispered, struggling to free herself. But Celeste only answered sternly:

"Be quiet! Do not make it harder for me than it is," and stumbled resolutely on, to the street door; but here a new difficulty confronted her. The door could not be moved. The walls had settled, and fastened it as completely as a thousand bolts and bars could have done.

"The basement," Carrie whispered, growing weaker every moment, from horror of the situation, and before Celeste had reached the basement door, the invalid was an insensible weight in her nurse's arms. It required all her strength to open this door, and she was obliged to put down her charge, but it yielded at last, and lifting the insensible girl, she tottered out into the night with her just as the walls shuddered and lurched, and cracked again; and a moment later, the crash of falling brick smote dismally on the dismal night air.

Mr. Forrest and Earle came hastening back; but the house was already a mass of brick and mortar, broken timbers and splintered glass. "Carrie, my God! Carrie," groaned the wretched father, feeling no doubt that his only child had survived the flood, to be buried beneath the ruins of her own home. "Carrie!" he groaned again, rushing forward and beginning

wildly to work away among the debris of his late home. "Oh, God! my only child, to die like this!"

And Earle could say nothing. There were no words to comfort such woe as this. The most he could do was to bring his pitiful, earthly aid, to the stricken father; and seeing how futile would be their lonely attempts, to volunteer to go after immediate help, which seemed almost a mockery, when nearly everyone was engaged in such agonizing search after their own loved and lost.

He turned away, but his feet were arrested by someone staggering around the scattered pile of bricks and mortar, bearing a burden in her arms, for through the wavering, uncertain darkness, Earle could distinguish that it was a woman; but who, or what? She walked painfully and slowly, with uncertain faltering steps, and laid her burden at the feet of the two men, then staggered and would have fallen herself, but for Earle's sustaining arm.

"It is Celeste!" he said in a low voice. "And she has saved Carrie."

But Mr. Forrest had already caught up the unconscious form, and satisfied himself, that it *was* Carrie. And a feeling of thankfulness entered his heart, as did not even have a lodgement there when the flood had passed them by. They made their way painfully and slowly to

the shelter they had secured, in a church near by, which was comparatively safe and comfortable, Mr. Forrest bearing Carrie, who had returned to consciousness, and Earle half-leading, half-supporting Celeste, who made no complaint and did not even groan, although Earle was quite sure that she suffered intensely, and that her days were numbered now.

As soon as they were in the light, he was horrified to see her face stained with blood, from a wound over her temple, made by a falling brick, or beam. She could not tell which, but knew that something struck her when she came out of the door with Carrie. And in a pitiful voice, she whispered to Earle: "The way of the transgressor is hard."

"But you felt that you were forgiven, Celeste," he answered gravely.

"Yes, I know. But it always seemed that I had never done anything to show my gratitude —that I never had the opportunity. Do you think God will accept this as a partial atonement?"

Earle's tears could not shame his manhood, as he replied: "'No one can do anything greater than to lay down his life for his brother.' And he knew that Celeste had laid down her life for a comparative stranger, who was still her sister.

But Carrie was telling their terrible experi-

ence and Celeste's bravery, and insisting on taking care of her. "And we will have you well again in no time," she continued hopefully.

But Celeste only smiled mournfully. She knew she should never be well again. Aside from the wound she had received, from which a stronger constitution would have recovered, the strain upon her nervous system was so great, she knew she could never be well again, and she was glad. Only one thing troubled her now, to make her peace with Leslie and Leone. As the gray dawn of the Sabbath morning broke over the ruined city, Celeste whispered: "If I could see Leslie, or even know that she was safe."

"I will do my best to find her," Earle replied, and went out at once, accompanied by Mr. Forrest, who felt that he could not remain inactive at such a time as this, but must do what he could to aid the surviving sufferers of one of the most appalling calamities in the annals of the world. As near as he could judge, Earle led the way to the place where Mrs. Norris' house had stood, but it was gone,—swept as completely off the face of the earth as though it had never been. With a feeling of horror indescribable at the probable fate of poor Leslie and the other inmates, he followed the trail of that swath of death down to the stone bridge, which was one mighty and awful funeral pyre, which

the fires of the insatiable fiend of destruction were even now consuming.

It was a terrible mass of ruins. The arches under the bridge were choked with ruins of homes, and every conceivable thing. The wreckage was piled high, and houses with their inmates were crashed one after another upon this terrible pile. To find the loved and the lost looked like a task that could never be ended and Earle's heart died within him, as he looked. And all unused to manual labor as he was, he went to work with a will, growing sick and faint with the horrors that were constantly disclosing; but still working, with the thought of Leslie before him, and Celeste dying in the church, that he had left that morning. One after another of the dead and the dying were taken out, but, as yet, no Leslie.

At last they came to a woman's form, crushed and lifeless, that sent a strange thrill of pain to Earle's heart. He knew that lifeless form by the dress and ornaments she wore when he saw her last; when she stood at the window, and waved her hand and smiled, as he stood in the rain by the gate, lifting his hat, and bowing his last farewell to Ida Marvel.

Where were the rest? Alas! who was to say? Tenderly they lifted her out, and bore her away, and Earle's arm was caught nervously by a haggard-faced, wild-eyed boy, who had just

come up, saying: "Earle! Mr. Thornton! you are safe! thank God!" And Earle had to look twice to recognize Willie Marvel in this shadow of the young man of Friday.

"Willie!" he cried, "where are the others? I mean John and your parents?"

"Father and mother are not yet found. John and I were out, away from the house, and barely escaped with our lives. But the house is gone, and everything—father, mother and Ida." And the youth broke down and cried piteously, clinging to Earle's hand, while another young man came forward and put his arm around Willie protectingly, and it needed no second look to show Earle that this boy of eighteen, with wild, tearless eyes, and trembling lips, was the sturdy, laughing John of two short days ago. A great wave of pity for these two stole into Earle's already sorely-aching heart, as he put an arm around each, and said gently:

"Can you bear something very sad, and yet what you are expecting, even against hope?"

"You have found them!" John gasped, trembling in every nerve.

"I have found poor——Ida," was the gentle response, as he led them to the place where Ida's remains lay; and John, crying bitterly, sank down beside his dead sister, but Willie only moaned and moaned, as he stood with clenched hands and tearless eyes.

"Oh, Ida, Ida, Ida! to think that you should go like this, with no hope! with no hope! Oh, oh! where are you now, Ida?"

"Don't, Willie, don't!" John moaned. "Poor Ida wasn't very bad, only a little wild, and liked dress and admiration. She had a good, kind heart, and always helped me out of my scrapes. Oh, Ida, Ida!"

"Alas, my sister! shall I never see you again?" Willie continued, wringing his hands. While John, writhing in this double anguish, the loss of his sister, and the condemnation his brother was sure must be hers, said, raising his streaming eyes to Earle:

"Oh, Mr. Thornton, speak to him! Oh, Mr Thornton, tell him that it is not so—that Ida is not lost, and we shall see her again!"

"Ida is in the hands of a merciful and loving Saviour," Earle said. "Can you not trust her to the mercy of Jesus, Willie?"

Whether he could or not, he grew quiet under Earle's words. Ida was removed, and the search continued for the missing parents, who were both found before night-fall, and the three removed for burial.

But as the days went by, Earle noticed that Willie was changing very materially. He began to talk as if he believed Ida was saved. She must be. He had prayed so much for her in the old days, and since her death too.

"But what is the use of praying for her now, if God does not give his children a second chance?" Earle asked.

"I can't believe as you do; but I believe God is going to save her, anyway."

"Why should he save Ida any more than any other mortal, who has died without a hope in the Saviour?"

"I don't know," Willie continued, "but I believe he will. You said yourself, you believed she was safe."

"Certainly I do. She is safe, because Jesus came to seek and save the lost, and he will most surely do what he came to do."

And so the matter dropped for a time, Willie believing that Ida was safe, because she was his sister, and God would not condemn his loved sister, whose only fault was girlish vanity, and a failure to acknowledge a Saviour's love.

And that is the way of the majority of those who argue in favor of endless torment. Down in the secret depths of the heart, they believe that theirs will be forgiven and saved, and restored to God's love and favor.

But to return to that dreadful Sabbath day. Earle's sorrowful search for Leslie still went on, and in another, and quite unexpected place and way, he found her. Removing the rubbish from another part of the debris, they came upon a woman, stunned and bruised, but seemingly

otherwise uninjured, with a boy of seven, or thereabouts, clasped in her arms, that all the tossing and tumbling had not unlocked—Leslie and Johnnie, he with his face hidden on her neck, and still alive. He looked up with a smile, as he recognized Earle, and then fainted quite away, with his face once more against Leslie's bosom.



CHAPTER XXV.

FORGIVEN.

AS soon as Leslie and Johnnie were moved, and help procured for them, Earle started back to see how it fared with Celeste. All day long he had thought of her, at intervals, and of her wretched life history, such a dreadful warning for thoughtless, giddy girls, who nearly always begin in that careless seeking after admiration, and end, alas! sometimes in the depths of dreadful disgrace and ignominy, unless God's hand stays them, as it did Celeste, or reaches out to snatch them back before they have passed the portals of sin. He found her nearly as he had left her, and looking at him eagerly and wistfully for news of Leslie.

"Yes," he said at once, "she is found, but unable to come to you."

"Is she dead?" Celeste whispered.

"No, but unconscious," Earle answered, judging it best to tell her the truth. "But I think she is uninjured and will soon recover."

"Do you think she will come?" Celeste continued, earnestly.

"I am sure she will if she can. I will keep you posted as to her welfare."

With a grateful look the French woman closed her eyes, and Earle could see how like the dead she looked, even then. Her paleness had deepened since morning, from loss of blood and fatigue. And he knew that she could not be much whiter, even when the clods were rattling down upon her coffined face. Somehow he wished that Harper could see her now, and know of her heroic efforts in Carrie's behalf. He believed that Harper would relent and tell her which was her daughter; and Earle felt a strong desire to solve this mystery for himself. Why could Harper not be found?

Almost as if divining his thoughts, Celeste's eyes opened, and she said in a low voice:

"If you ever—find—Harper—you will try to —find out—the truth."

"Yes, I promise you I will."

"I have hoped it was Leone, but I do not now," she continued.

"Why not now?"

"For your sake. You see I know your secret. It would not be pleasant to know that the woman you loved was the daughter of such a mother."

For a moment, Earle was stunned by the as-

sertion. He covered his face with his hands and looked into his own heart. With all his bravery, his truth, his uprightness, the deep-seated Christ-principle, he was still human enough to feel pride in his good birth, and the irreproachable birth of the woman who would one day be the mother of his children. He loved Leone. He should never marry unless he married Leone, and he did trust that she was born in wedlock, but if she were not, and loved him in return, he would still make her his wife. Love was first. He looked up and replied:

"If Leone loved me, and were willing to marry me, I would forget your sad story."

"But Leone will never marry anyone, unless she can bring a stainless name to the altar. You see I know her." And Earle felt that it was true. Leone would never cause husband or children to blush for her maiden name. "That is the reason I hope Leone is not my daughter," Celeste continued. You deserve a better fate than that would be. And Leone will never marry until she knows the truth. There are times when it seems as though Leone were dearer than Leslie, and that makes me fear that she is mine; and then Leslie has always been persecuted by Harper. Perhaps the reason I feel so toward Leone is because I am afraid she is mine, and I pity her for her legacy of shame. On the other hand, if it is Leslie,

she is more to be pitied than Leone. She has not the strength, the integrity, the firmness to endure the truth. Ah! *Mon Diere!* how wicked I have been."

This is always the cry of the truly repentant, of the broken and contrite heart. The marks of that which once hath been always remain while life shall last; which proves that it is, oh, so much better, to *yield not to temptation;* for though Christ will forgive and wash away the stain, yet in the bitterness of our own hearts, we know how sinful we have been. Celeste knew and she could not forget. Now Earle hovered constantly between her and Leslie, giving what time he could to others that needed aid, and not forgetting the Marvel brothers.

But Leslie was slow to come back to life. She was not injured, only stunned, bruised and frightened. Johnnie's recovery was far swifter, and he related their experience, as far as he knew. Nellie had flown down the stairs to her mother. Leslie had come up to him. He had never seen Nellie nor mamma since; maybe he never would; and his lips quivered as he told it; and his brave, childish eyes filled with tears. But he showed no other signs of emotion, for Johnnie had learned thus early to be brave, and face the worst with an undaunted front. But he said if he never saw mamma nor Nellie here, he knew he should see them in heaven;

for mamma was good, and Nellie was good, and he meant to be good, too, and maybe God would let Leslie live and take care of him. And then he stood and watched Leslie intently, but she showed no signs of consciousness, although she occasionally opened her eyes and looked about her, but closed them again, with a long-drawn, shuddering sigh, and a horrified look.

And thus nearly all of Monday passed, and neither Celeste nor Leslie seemed better or worse. Earle was going back to Celeste again, thinking pitifully of her sad condition, and wishing that Harper might chance to come there, when he felt someone hurrying up behind him, and a trembling hand was laid on his arm, and turning quickly, he stood face to face with Leone.

"*Leone!*" he exclaimed, taking both of her hands in his at once, "when—how did you happen to come?"

But Leone was shaking with suppressed emotion, and could not answer at once, and so we will answer for her. She had left Cleveland a few weeks previous. Sam had written that grandmother was quite unwell, and would Leone come home. And Leone, though she did not like to leave her work in Cleveland, and her hope of finding Leslie, yet felt that it might be her duty to return to Grandpa Trent's and take her old position as housekeeper, and so she went.

Mrs. Trent was very pleasant for a few days, but soon began to assert herself, and fall back into her old habits of fault-finding and sarcastic flings at Leone's religion; and to a girl of her nervous, quick, and naturally high temper, this was very hard to bear, but she tried to fortify herself by watchfulness and prayer, and in a great measure succeeded.

She was here when the telegram came from Earle, and later, the long letter he wrote in regard to his finding Leslie. And Sam, to whom she gave the letter to read, rejoiced with her over Leslie's innocence of the charge they had tacitly laid at her door, and looking up, said in a low voice: "The Lord wouldn't let her fall, would he?"

It was the first time she had ever heard Sam attribute anything good to the Lord, and she mentally thanked God that the good leaven had begun to work in his mind, and said:

"No; if our faith is ever so small, he will keep us up somehow, and I am sure that Leslie had a good deal of faith and hope." And Leone did not know how Sam had thought, in his boyish heart, when Leslie went away, that there could be no God, or he would not permit one so young and fair and innocent to go to ruin; nor how the thought had haunted him all through the months and years of Leslie's absence, that perhaps there is a God, and he had taken Leslie

away to save her from temptation greater than she could bear. And now, as soon as he could, he stole away to his own room, and for the first time in his life of twenty-five years, knelt down and prayed to God for himself, and thanked him that Leslie was safe.

But the next night he came home with a white and horrified face, causing Leone to ask anxiously: "What is the matter?"

"The most terrible thing I ever heard of;" and with a trembling voice, he told all that was then known of the dreadful disaster in the Conemaugh valley. Grandfather Trent, usually sympathetic, was visibly excited. But grandmother received it very coolly. She was not affected by anything so far from home, and she had no interests there. But Leone could only gasp: "Leslie is there—and—and—Earle;" and in that moment, she knew that Earle's being there was the greater affliction, although she would not admit it, even to her own heart and tried to think only of Leslie and her peril.

"What are you going to do?" Sam asked, hoping for the answer that she promptly gave:

"I am going to Johnstown."

"I shall go with you," Sam returned.

Then, indeed, grandmother roused herself. To have both of these props withdraw at once was too much, and she exclaimed: "What on earth are you going trapesing off there for?"

"To find Leslie," was the prompt reply.

"Leslie! You've been finding Leslie for the last three or four years. I wouldn't make a fool of myself, if I was you."

The time had come for plain speaking, and without any preliminary remarks, Leone told the story of herself and Leslie, which Sam understood now for the first time. She continued: "Leslie is also my father's daughter, and for aught I know she has a better right here than I. I am going to find Leslie."

Grandfather took out his pocketbook, with the words: "You hain't got money enough, have you?"

And she knew that he wanted her to go, and hastened to say: "Plenty. I don't need any more. Thank you for your kindness."

"But you'll spend all you've got, and won't find her after all," grandmother continued, still bent upon having her own way, at all hazards.

"We will hope for the best," Leone replied.

"What'll you do with her, after you find her, I'd like to know?" Mrs. Trent continued, fretfully.

"Bring her home, of course. The old house is big enough for one more, I guess," Mr. Trent replied, and Leone noticed that his voice trembled curiously, and there was a sound of tears in the words.

"Good heavens! are you crazy?" grandmother said excitedly. "We're as poor as poverty now. How many more do you think we can board?"

"But Leslie has got to have a home, hain't she, mother?" her husband asked.

"She's got along without one so far."

"Well, well, let's not argue!" Sam exclaimed, a little testily. "Let's wait until we find her, at any rate."

And so Sam and Leone started for Johnstown, full of fear as to the fate of Leslie and Earle. They had been wandering for some hours among the ruins and the desolation, but without finding any clue to either, when they so unexpectedly saw Earle, walking ahead of them, and quickened their steps enough to overtake him, and greet him, as we have seen. And after the first feeling of thankfulness that Earle was safe, Leone said:

"Leslie! do you know anything of Leslie?"

"Leslie is found;" and in as few words as possible, Earle told the story.

"And do you think she will finally recover?"

"Yes, I am quite sure she will." And then in a lower voice, he said: "There is someone else here, Leone."

She looked up and read his meaning in his eyes, and barely aspirated, "Celeste!"

"Yes, Celeste is here, too, and her story is even sadder than Leslie's;" and that also was

briefly told. And then Earle asked: "Which of them will you see first?"

"Which *should* I see first?" she quietly asked.

"Celeste cannot live, and I think Leslie can."

"Then let me go to Celeste first."

In all she was so much different from Leslie. It was not herself and her own desires first, but the question of right and duty. Her heart had been as bitter toward the erring woman as Leslie's, but her perceptions of right and wrong were clearer. She had felt in those old days that she could never forgive Celeste, even if she were her own mother; and certainly not, if she were her mother's supplanter. Now, she silently beckoned Sam to follow, and they went hastily forward. As they were moving along, Earle said:

"You will find very few of even the necessaries of life here, and I know you must need both rest and refreshment."

Leone pointed smilingly to the valise that her cousin carried, and said: "It is well filled with provisions. We prepared for an emergency."

The sights and sounds in the ruined city were still sickening, and even sturdy Sam's lips quivered more than once. On the way, they met Willie and John Marvel, who stopped, and were duly made known to the new-comers, who clasped their hands in sympathy for them in their great bereavement, so sore and heavy, the

loss of father, mother, sister, home and fortune. They were both working heroically, however, to help those who were as unfortunate as themselves. And John, who had been careless and indifferent, was steadily gaining in the broader Christian hope.

Then they went silently into the church, which served as a hospital and a home for the sick and wounded. Here Mrs. Forrest met them and insisted on their having supper, such as it was, before they went in to see Celeste. The doctor had been there, she said, and a stranger with him. She presumed he also was a physician. No, they had not gone yet. There they go now, and Earle and Leone both looked up in time to see Dr. Gray disappear through the door preceded by a stranger, of whom they only caught an unsatisfactory glimpse.

Carrie came forward, still weak, but trying to the best of her ability to take care of herself and be useful, and pleasantly greeted Leone and Sam, and showed a partiality at once for the latter, which was reciprocated by our young laborer.

After their frugal supper, much enhanced by the contents of Sam's valise, they proceeded to Celeste's side. She lay on an improvised bed, behind the altar, and she had said to Earle once that God was very good to let Celeste Lascelles die in a place like that, consecrated to the

Lord. And Earle thought of it now, as he bent over her and said:

"Leone has come, Celeste. She is here. Do you see her?" for he knew when he spoke that the angel of death was near.

She smiled pathetically as she replied: "Yes, and I know now that God has forgiven me, for he has not permitted me to die without knowing the truth. Harper has been here." And then motioning Leone, she tried to tell her something, but could only whisper, "Forgive."

And Leone leaned down with the words: "As I hope to be forgiven of God."

Then she kissed the dying lips, which quivered a little, and tried again to speak. And turning away with streaming eyes, her head sank on Earle's shoulder. She had forgiven Celeste.



CHAPTER XXVI.

NEW TRIALS.

THE many-tinted autumn leaves made the forests one gorgeous mosaic warp of light and shade. The golden October sunshine lay over all a burnished halo of glory; and for one brief moment, from her never-ending round of labors, Leone stood in the farm-house door, and took in the lovely scene, with a feeling half joy and half pain. On the one side the fields and the forests, on the other, the half-hidden country town of Lakeside.

Several months had passed since the horror of Johnstown. Sam and Leone had come back soon after Celeste's death, for it was thought best to bring her here for burial, and Dr. Gray said that it certainly would not hurt Leslie to move her, but might prove a benefit, only she must be kept from all undue excitement, and so nothing was said to her about the woman she had called mother, until long after, and then Leone told the sad story of poor Celeste's brav-

ery, and death and burial. Leslie cried a little, and said: "She did not tell you anything, you say?"

"No; she was too weak."

"It does seem as though you should have got one word, by asking her."

"Could I be so cruel to a dying woman?" Leone asked, her eyes filling with tears, as she turned away, thinking how very selfish Leslie was growing.

And in all these weeks, the thought of Leslie's selfishness had not abated. There was now a family of six, for they had brought Johnnie with them. How could they leave him? "Poor, forlorn, little fellow," Sam said, "he shall go home with us, if I have to live on one meal a day to pay for it."

Of course, the care had been an added tax on Leone, whose strength was not equal to everything, even if grandma did seem to think it was. There was Johnnie, a helpless child to look after, grandpa and Sam, who as men were not expected to aid about the house, and grandma, who plainly declined "doing drudgery," as she termed it, and made more fancy quilts than ever, and read more story papers than was good for her; and then—there was Leslie, who from the day she crossed the threshold of the Trent home, until the present hour, had never offered to lighten Leone's labors.

True, she came there ill, and unfit for work of any kind, but she had long since regained her health, yet she continued to look upon Leone as a sort of servant, and mentally determined to take her ease and comfort while she could. She sat all day long swinging back and forth in her easy rocker, reading, or lying on the lounge, until Sam returned from his work. Then she would rouse herself enough to be agreeable during the evening, but with the return of morning, she resumed her cold, distant manner, and continued her reading, and her curious watching of Leone, who grew to bitterly regard herself as the family drudge.

Nothing but a growing selfishness could have caused the once bright, affectionate Leslie, to become so dwarfed in soul;—a growing selfishness, and the selfishly fastened hope that she was Bernard Trent's lawful daughter. Leslie and Mrs. Trent were very good friends, for the latter contrived to tell her that but for her, she would have been left in Johnstown.

"I told Sam he must bring you home with him," she said, and the poor old lady really imagined that she was speaking the truth. "You see, I knew you could not take care of yourself in such a dreadful place. It was lucky Sam could go."

Never a word did she say of Leone, and Leslie grew to think that Leone went to Johnstown

out of curiosity. Had it not been for grandmother, she and Johnnie would never have had a home at the Trent farm. It is so easy for some to distrust their best friends, and so extremely natural for some people to contrive to make everybody believe that they are your best friends.

Sam was becoming rapidly disenchanted with Leslie, owing, perhaps, to the interest he felt in Carrie Forrest, who wrote regularly to Leone, and always sent a kind word to her cousin Sam.

As for Leslie, had she been consulted in regard to coming back to Lakeside, or had she been fully conscious of what was being done, she would have refused most decidedly. When she first returned to consciousness, and realized where she was, the thought of being in the same town with Fred Barstow was almost intolerable. But Leone soothed her gently, and told her that she need never meet Fred; and quite likely he would not dare to see her now, even if he had any desire. At this, poor Leslie writhed and moaned, knowing that deep down in her heart Fred's image had never been effaced, and if she had sinned in those olden days, it would have been through love. And Fred had most likely forgotten her, and would marry another woman.

And here she glanced down at her white hands, lying so idly in her lap, and remem-

bered how Fred used to admire her hands, and say that a lady's hands were always white and soft, and he would never marry a woman with toil-stained hands. She stole a covert glance at Leone's hands, which were browner than when she saw them first a few years ago, but no one, from their delicate texture and form, would ever mistake them for anything but a lady's hands. In her heart Leslie knew that she did not dislike Leone. She was only intensely jealous of her, and of her superior attainments; and the contrast between them only deepened her fear that she was Celeste's daughter, after all.

But Leone was now using every spare moment to make her music more and more perfect. She had written and composed several pieces which were favorably received, and her success caused her to make still greater efforts. In all this, she had no sympathy from anyone—not even from Leslie, who loved music. Sam and her grandfather could not understand the whys and wherefores, and Mrs. Trent was simply indifferent. She would have been much better pleased if her granddaughter had conceived the idea of weaving a rag carpet, or even gone out to service. "That would look like doing something," she said, "but that everlasting squawk, squawk, never'd amount to anything."

And so Leone, like so many others, was forced to work at her chosen vocation without sympa-

thizing aid or help from home friends. Johnnie was a comfort to her in these days, for he appreciated music, especially singing, and, in fact, anything that Leone chose to do.

"I've known Leslie longest," he said, "and I s'pose I like her best; but Leone always helps me about everything I want to learn, and somehow Leone seems more like mother, and Leslie's just Leslie, you know." And the little fellow's lips quivered, and his eyes filled with tears, as he thought of the mother that he would never see again on earth."

And Sam, to whom Johnnie had brought this confidence, thought how he had never known, for years, a mother's care, until Leone came. She was both mother and sister to him. Grandma Trent simply could not be motherly. It was not in her nature. Her own children had sorely missed this element so essential to womanly character; no wonder her grandchildren could not find it.

"I believe Leone is quite motherly," Sam said, more to himself than to Johnnie. "Anyway she's much too good to dwindle down to the family drudge."

"What is a family drudge, Sam?"

"Why, it's something like our Leone—an awful nice sort of a girl, that has everything to do and everybody to wait on."

"Leslie ain't one, is she?"

"Not much. Leslie isn't able to work, you know. And it would not be good for her hands, either."

Sam spoke bitterly; he was disenchanted with Leslie, and wondered how he ever could have cared for her. Johnnie was puzzled, and wondered over it all day, and at night said to Leslie, when she put him to bed: (for that was something she never shirked—her duty to Johnnie in certain things. Of course, she couldn't do the washing and mending for him. Let Leone do that. And so Leone did it.)

"Leslie, would you like to be a family drudge?"

"What do you mean?" she asked quickly.

"Why, like Leone! She's the family drudge, you know."

"Who has been putting such nonsense in your head, Johnnie?" she asked, not without certain qualms of conscience, however.

"Nobody hain't. But Sam says that's what she is."

"Oh! Sam says so, does he? Mr. Sam takes a good deal of interest in Leone, I should think. If she don't like to stay here, she'd better find another home."

"I don't know what we'd all do if Leone should go away, I'm sure, Leslie. I don't know what in the world we'd do, specially you and grandma."

"Why grandma and me?"

"'Cause you can't either one of you do anything, you know, and somebody's got to work. But, goodbye, Leslie. I'm sleepy and tired, and you know I've got to help grandpa dig potatoes tomorrow."

And Johnnie's sleepy eyes closed, while Leslie sat and thought of what he had said, and wondered if she ought to help Leone, but concluded that she was not able; she had no strength. She was always tired and languid now, and never once dreamed that a little wholesome labor would bring back her strength and dispel her languor. That constant novel-reading and lack of exercise would undermine the strongest constitution. It is, in fact, a species of intemperance, into which people of certain temperaments are apt to fall. And mothers should guard against this very intemperance which is laying the deadly seed-germs of a worse form of dissipation, that will in time become hereditary, and curse the lives of unborn generations.

Many mothers will not allow their girls to work, for fear that it will interfere with their studies and accomplishments. But a judicious mother should know just how much time her daughter can spend in manual exercise, and not interfere with study. She should also know that it is very necessary for a girl to have plenty of physical exercise, that her health may not

fail. Some are afraid of hurting their daughters, and succeed in hurting them immeasurably, through a mistaken indulgence. If girls are delicate, a certain amount of exercise is always beneficial, and a wise and loving mother will never over-work her child. Lack of air and exercise, and a constant moping in close rooms with an exciting novel for a companion, will have a most disastrous effect on a young and growing girl. And it is about as bad on a woman, or anybody else.

But Leslie did not know this. In the old school days, she had plenty of exercise and companions, and did not read much. Now, however, all was changed, and she felt a morbid craving for excitement, even if only in reading. I'm not condemning the novel. Why should I, when there are so many people who never read anything else? But I contend that they should have the best of its kind; and a book should never see the light of day, that does not tend to elevate and refine.

Mary Deane made some such remarks as these in a call at the Trent farm, and Leone, thinking of the predilection of many boys of her acquaintance for cheap, paper-covered trash, called novels, said:

"I quite agree with you, and think it would be an inestimable service to the coming gener-

ation, if the trash afloat on the reading public, called Nickle Libraries, War Libraries, Detective Series, and so on, could be utterly and entirely done away. It is dreadful."

"So it is; and Nathan says it's just the kind of reading in which nearly all the shop boys indulge."

"No wonder their ideas are crude and unformed; that their estimate of human nature is low and debased. Why, a man's books have as much influence over him as his companions."

And as soon as the visitor was gone, grandma aired her opinions freely: "I don't believe Sam and the other boys are so very much worse than Nate Deane, if he *has* taken to readin' the Bible lately. Anybody'd think to hear you talk that you were the only respectable one in the Trent family. I never could see as you were so much above the rest of us."

Leone made no reply. She had learned that silence was golden, in somes cases, at least. Grandma continued:

"Maybe you think you're better, on account of your mystery. Mysteries are always attractive in novels. Or maybe its because you set up for a saint. Saints are always attractive to some folks; but I never could abide them.

CHAPTER XXVII.

GOING TO GLENDALE.

THE state of affairs was growing much better indeed for the hands in the box-factory. Under the new rules, Messrs. Barstow and Barstow could not help seeing that their hands did much better, and more satisfactory work. And the men felt that their hours of recreation gave added strength and vigor, and life was not half so hard and hopeless as a few years before. Nathan Deane induced many of them to spend their time among the haunts of nature, or in the reading-room, or attending lectures, meetings, etc. And it was not very hard for him to influence his companions for good, for the most obstinate and careless one among them could not fail to see the help he had already been to them, and the good and true life that Deane was trying to live. So if we always use our talents for good, people will never be afraid to follow where we lead.

Under Nathan Deane's leadership, and Le-

one's efforts, Sam was making wonderful progress, and launching out into broader and higher views. Perhaps the memory of Carrie had something to do with it. At any rate, he had thrown aside all trashy reading, and given up his frivolous companions.

Leslie had not yet aroused herself from her lethargy, but Johnnie's words had had their effect on her mind. But this life of indolence and ease into which she had fallen was very pleasant to one of her temperament. She had a half-formed idea that Leone worked because she felt able, and liked it, not because somebody had it to do. But Leslie was no more unjust than many other selfish people, who from a life-long habit of pandering to self, imagine that other people would not do things that were not agreeable or perfectly easy.

But one day a letter came from Mrs. Helen Earle, inviting Leone to Glendale, to spend a few weeks with her. "Earle is away so much," she wrote, "that it would be a real kindness for you to come and stay with me awhile."

"Are you going?" Johnnie asked, while the shadows gathered in his eyes, and Sam knew that he was thinking of his mother.

"Yes, I am going," Leone answered decidedly, and then noting Johnnie's look, she asked gently: "You don't care, do you?"

Johnnie's lips quivered a little, but he turned

and looked out of the door, answering bravely: "Of course not; that is, I shall hate to have you go, some; but I want you to go if you want to. Don't you, Sam?"

But the husky little voice was a most eloquent tribute to Leone. The tears gathered in her own eyes as she looked at the sadly-orphaned child, and felt that it would be even harder to leave Johnnie than the others.

Sam could not reply before Mrs. Trent, who said: "What on earth do you want to go there for?"

"I would like to see my old home once more."

"I shouldn't think you'd ever want to see it again."

"Why?"

"I shouldn't, if I'd had such bad luck. Your father run through with his property. It wouldn't be any old home to me. Nobody ever thought enough of you to come out here to see you, either."

"I guess they didn't know Leone very well, if they didn't think much of her," Johnnie said, coming bravely to the rescue of his favorite. And Leone, as she stroked the curly head, thought it very true that they did not know her very well. She was known only as the rich Miss Trent, and worshiped accordingly; and when she sank into insignificant poverty, her social star went down. She had held herself

proudly and capriciously aloof, and was content to be admired for wealth and position, and when wealth and position died, Leone Trent sank into insignificance. The little world of Glendale did not know that she possessed any other qualities of commendation.

She had felt the change grievously at the time. Now she knew it was quite natural. She had done nothing to commend herself to anyone. She had done nothing to win hearts, unless it was Mrs. Marks' and Kitty's and honest Tom Tipton's. They knew her and loved her. And it would be well worth the journey to Glendale to find Tom and tell him that his letter was, by the blessing of God, the means of drawing her to Christ. And besides, she felt a laudable desire for the Glendale people to know her for what she was.

"I shouldn't think you'd think of going, with nobody to do the work here," her grandmother ventured.

"Do you expect Leone is always going to stay here and do the work, mother?" Jonathan Trent asked, as he laid his paper down, took off his glasses and wiped them carefully, and then handed them to Johnnie, who hasted to put them away, as he had always done since the day he came to the Trent farm.

"I shouldn't think she did, she's always on the go,—to Cleveland and Johnstown, and now

she wants to take a trip to Europe. Next thing you know, she'll want to go to the moon, and I s'pose she'll go if she wants to. You'd all turn in and say that the moon was just the place for her to visit."

"If she does, I'll go with her," Johnnie said. "I'd like to know what's up in the moon, wouldn't you, Sam?"

But Sam only laughed and pulled one of Johnnie's curls, while Leone, who could endure her pent-up thoughts no longer, said:

"I am sure I am not leaving you without help. Here is Leslie, full as able to work as I am. She can take my place while I am gone." And for the first time during the conversation, Leslie laid down her book and looked at Leone.

"You must have a great deal of regard for me and my welfare," she said, shrugging her shapely shoulders, "to talk in that unkind way."

"Leslie," Leone replied calmly, "I have kept silent until forbearance ceases to be a virtue. You are my sister. Don't think that I lose sight of that fact for one moment. You are doing yourself far more injury in your constant reading and lack of exercise, than I would do you by having you take your share of the work. I have brooded upon this one thing so long, that I have come to the conclusion that if Christian Socialism favored an equal distribution of la-

bor, I would give my heart and voice to Communism. There is no injustice any more bitter, than to select one for a family drudge, while the remainder live in comparative ease and comfort."

"Hire a hall, somebody do, and let's have a lecture on Socialism," Leslie cried with a mirthless laugh. "Leone is following in the footsteps of Susan B. Next we shall have Woman's Rights on the platform. I hope you won't put on the Bloomer apparel, though. I'm afraid it wouldn't be becoming."

Mrs. Trent laughed and applauded. It was the most Leslie had said at one time since she came to the Trent farm. She had all along maintained a studied, silent reserve which was exceedingly foreign to her nature; and Leone was glad to see her come out of it, if ever so little, even if she did indulge in sarcastic flings at herself. But there was a far greater depth of congeniality between Grandma Trent and Leslie, than there ever had been, or could be, between her and Leone. They were not enough alike in thoughts, feelings and fancies to bring them very near together. And their nervous magnetism was too much alike to ever allow a pleasant, peaceful life between them. And then grandma could never forget what Leone said on the morning after her arrival. The words always rankled in her heart, and she was

not noble and generous enough to excuse or forgive them: "Disappointed in her father's mother, who was not a lady!"

"When do you want to start?" Sam asked, hoping to turn the conversation.

"Next Wednesday, and this is Monday."

The subject was dropped. But Mr. Trent and Sam tacitly agreed that Leone was to go and make her visit. Poor little Johnnie talked incessantly about it, and hoped she wouldn't be homesick. And Leone could not know how homesick the little fellow was at the very thought of her going, who reminded him so much of mamma, "while Leslie was only just Leslie." But many times during the weeks that followed, Leone's thoughts traveled back to Johnnie with a feeling of wistful tenderness.

After Leone had gone, Leslie roused herself to something like her old nature, and Johnnie confidentially told Sam that she was like the Leslie before mamma died, in the dreadful flood; and Sam felt that she was more like the Leslie he had known in the years gone by, before Fred Barstow's baleful influence had blighted the promise of her life.

"Perhaps Leone is right," Leslie thought. "I certainly do feel better and happier to know that I am doing something for somebody, than to sit by myself and think of my own misery, or find a parallel to it in some sensational novel."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

"A LITTLE CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM."

WHEN Leone had gone, Johnnie wandered disconsolately about the house and farm, and many times shed secret tears over his own childish griefs, with no one to care. For Sam was away all day, grandpa busy over his late fall crops, or with his newspapers, grandma mourning over the sorrows of the heroes and heroines in the illustrated story-papers, and Leslie deep in the mysteries of housekeeping.

"Oh, dear!" she sighed, as she threw herself disconsolately down on the lounge, after her first day's baking. "I never knew it was such hard work. I don't believe it is for anyone else. Of course, it isn't for Leone, or she wouldn't do it. But she is stronger than I am. It is really selfish and unkind in her to leave me like this."

And as the days went by, Leslie thought bitterly of her grandmother's inactivity. That

was "really selfish and unkind." She didn't see how anyone could sit and do nothing, and see someone else constantly at work. And once, in the bitterness of her spirit, she said so to Johnnie. But he was altogether too straightforward and honest to say anything that he did not mean, and so he replied:

"You didn't do anything when Leone was here, did you?"

"Well, that is different. I am not well, and Leone is."

"No, she isn't; for I heard Dr. Mann tell Sam, when he came to see you, that there was nothing the matter of you, only you didn't do enough work; and he said Sam must be careful, or he'd let Leone kill herself waiting on the rest of the family."

Leslie bit her lip and turned away in anger. Clearly she should get no sympathy from Johnnie nor from Sam. She thought of it a good deal in those days, particularly as Johnnie never lost an opportunity of preaching some brief but eloquent sermon, in his childish way, that set her to reviewing her past life, and made her see how weak she had been in her supposed strength.

"I don't believe I was ever founded on the Rock," she thought, at last. "My faith has been, at best, but a half-hearted faith,—full of doubt. I believe now that I am neither hot nor cold,

and will yet be spewed out." And for the first time in her whole life, Leslie began to think seriously.

Johnnie found her crying one day, in her sore distress and perplexity, and throwing his arms around her neck, cried with her.

"Don't, Johnnie, don't," she gasped. "This is harder than all the rest, for I have not been as kind to you, as I should have been."

"Why wasn't you, then?" Johnnie sobbed, clinging closer to her and crying all the harder. "You knew that mamma and Nellie were dead, didn't you?"

"Alas, yes! but it seemed that nobody had ever had any trouble but myself. I just begin to see that I *have* been selfish."

"Are you going to be like you used to be, now, Leslie?"

"No, I am going to be better, if I can."

"But you can't, you know, unless God makes you better. That's what Leone says."

"I don't know whether he'll make me better or not," Leslie murmured despondently.

"Why don't you ask him, then?"

"Do you think it would do any good?"

"'Course it would, 'cause Leone says it does. When I'm naughty, she says I must ask God to make me good."

"But it doesn't seem as if God would want to bother with me and my little affairs," Leslie

continued half to herself, half aloud, and Johnnie hastened to add:

"You know that verse that Jesus said to the people, 'If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.' Asking to be good is something, ain't it?"

And so, little by little, Johnnie was doing his work. He and Sam had long, curious talks about the ways and means of being and doing good, and Sam never once thought that Johnnie was too young, or too small, to converse with. Indeed, it seemed to him that he was being led by an invisible cord, and Johnnie was the motive power. He would also approach Mr. Trent, whom he called grandpa, but of grandma he was exceedingly shy. The sharp, irascible way she had of dealing with Leone, in particular, and everybody, in general, had long ago made its impression on Johnnie's mind, and he was repelled from her. But to Sam he could talk as readily as to Leslie.

"Don't you think the Sunday-School lessons are awful nice, Sam?" he asked one evening, as he and Sam sat by themselves in front of the kitchen fire.

"Yes, I guess so," was the half-careless reply. "What makes you think they're nice?"

"'Cause they are; last Sunday's lesson was 'Sin, Forgiveness and Peace,' you know, and my teacher said if anybody was naughty, that

was sin, and if he was real sorry for being naughty, God would forgive him, and peace would come. I think that's real nice, don't you?"

"Yes, if anybody was sure he was forgiven," Sam replied, in a musing voice.

"Of course, he's sure, when he gets peaceful, ain't he?"

"Yes. I had not thought of that. Yes, I think he would be sure, when he got peaceful. He'd feel at peace with everything, I suppose;" and Sam drummed idly on Johnnie's chair, and looked into the fire, with far-away eyes. He wished he could feel at peace with God, and knew that the Lord cared for him day and night, as Leone seemed to know. But somehow, he could not,—not just now, though much more than he used to; and he relied upon the arm of the Lord now, where once he had not thought of him at all.

"Yes, and Miss Allen told us 'twas 'cause we felt right toward God and everybody that brings peace, you know. Sam, I tell you what," Johnnie whispered, waxing confidential, as he drew nearer Sam, "I wish grandma would get at peace with God, don't you?"

"What makes you think she isn't?"

"'Cause she bites off her words so when she talks, and—and—you know, Sam, she's real cross, sometimes. I'm going to ask God, when I

pray to him tonight, to bring her forgiveness and peace, so she'll be happier and feel better. Wouldn't you, now?"

"Yes, I would," Sam replied, with a vague feeling that perhaps Johnnie's prayers might avail much. But a few moments later, the curly little head had drooped against Sam's shoulder, and tired Johnnie was fast asleep. Sam took him up with an awkward kind of tenderness, and carrying him upstairs, undressed him and put him to bed, without calling on Leslie.

"Poor little chap!" he mused, "you've more than paid me already, for bringing you home from Johnstown. But I'm a little bit sorry you went to sleep without praying for grandmother. I think God would hear you."

Perhaps Johnnie had already prayed for grandma, and Sam had said, Amen. Leone had prayed for these wayward ones from the time that she first came into the light; but, as yet, there had been no visible change in any but Sam, and Leone almost felt that God did not want to bring the others in yet. But Johnnie did not seem to be in any way discouraged or abashed, but renewed the attack day by day, without in the least realizing what he was doing, and that he was an unconscious instrument in the hands of the living God. The next morning, as they were husking corn, and Johnnie

was helping with all his might, grandpa said:

"What was that you and Sam were talking about last night?"

Johnnie's mind went back to last night, and he queried: "When? when we were alone, after supper?"

"Yes, I guess so."

"Oh, we were talking about our Sunday School lesson. Didn't you study it when you was a little boy?"

"I didn't go to Sunday-School when I was a little shaver."

"You didn't! Why not?"

"Didn't have none in them days. When I was a little boy, this country was all woods and wild animals."

Johnnie looked over his shoulder, then got up, and coming nearer Grandpa Trent, sat down, visibly interested, and not a little afraid of the wild animals that once roamed right here, through the woods, as grandpa continued to explain.

"Was it woods here, right here?"

"Bless you, yes. I can remember when my father cleared this lot off. We used it for a pasture lot."

"Did the wild animals ever come here?"

"I expect they did. We used to have our sheep and calves took off sometimes in the daytime."

"Maybe 'twas dogs that done it. The dogs got after Mr. Parker's sheep, you know."

"Yes I know; but 'twasn't dogs in them days. Why, bless you! I've run like a whitehead, through these 'ere woods, when it got late, and I was sent to bring the cows home. And once it got later than common. It was a long time before I heard the bell on old Mooly's neck—"

"A bell! Did the cows wear bells?"

"Certain, they did. They had to wear bells, so we could find 'em."

"Well, but you was awful late that night; what happened?"

"Well, I found old Mooly, and started 'em all home, and got part way, when it got dark, and as I looked back I could see something follerin' me, that looked like two balls of fire, a little ways from the ground, and that pesky thing follered me till I got into the clearin', and father came out to meet me with a lantern. I didn't go after the cows after dark again, I can tell you."

"What was it that followed you?" Johnnie asked, drawing still nearer, and shivering a little, at the terrible thought of the two balls of fire.

"I expect 'twas a panther."

"What made it look like two balls of fire, then?"

"Its eyes, my boy, its eyes. Didn't you ever see a cat's eyes after dark?"

"I don't know."

"Well, you look at old Tim tonight, and if he's a little scart or mad, his eyes'll look like balls of fire."

"Are panther's eyes like cat's eyes?"

"Somewhat."

Johnnie mused for a long while upon this story, after asking innumerable questions. And at night he searched Tim out to examine his eyes, in the dark. But in the meantime he asked:

"So you couldn't go to Sunday-School?"

"No."

"Why don't you go now, then? You could come in Miss Allen's class with me."

Grandpa laughed a little, at the idea of going in Miss Allen's class with Johnnie, but said: "I guess I'm getting too old."

"No, you ain't. Old Mr. Norton goes, and he's a good deal older than you are."

"He's always been. That makes a difference. I'm too old to begin to go."

"Are you too old to begin to go to church?"

"I guess so."

Johnnie pondered on this perplexing question for some time, and at last asked: "Does anyone ever get too old to die?"

"No. Everybody has got to die."

"Then you'll have to commence to go to Sunday-School and church just like a little boy, when you die, won't you?"

"Like enough. What makes you think so?"

"'Cause everybody's got to learn about Jesus, you know."

"Who says so?"

"Why, God says so."

"Who told you?"

"Leone; and Miss Allen read it to us once out of the Bible. I'll find it for you, when we go home. It says, "Every knee shall bow," and I don't remember the rest, but Leone said it meant everybody had got to learn about God, and love and serve him; and she says it's a good deal better to learn now, than to wait for punishments to make us learn."



CHAPTER XXIX.

TOM'S REWARD.

"AND now, dear, I'm going to tell you of the arrangements I have made for your visit," Mrs. Helen Earle said, as she and Leone sat in the gathering twilight, the evening of the latter's arrival in Glendale. "You see, I thought it would be dull, with no one but myself; and Earle may or may not be here, only Sundays, when he preaches here, unless he finds someone to take his place: and so I have invited a few friends. Will it please you?"

"I am sure I would be pleased with any of your arrangements, but I am afraid you have taken unnecessary trouble for me."

"Not at all. You see I like the right sort of company myself, and I think these friends will all prove congenial."

"May I ask who they are?"

"I have been waiting for you to ask. Mrs. Kirby and Annie, Mrs. Cecile Stevens and Mrs. William Walden, *nee* Marcia Kirby; and our

gentlemen friends are to run down whenever they can. Do you like the arrangement?"

"Exceedingly, and you are very kind."

"Nonsense! It will please me as much as anybody."

"Will our friends come soon?"

"Any day this week. And before they come, you can improve the time to suit yourself. Earle is on a preaching tour at present, but he is liable to return at any time. His pulpit was supplied last Sunday by a friend of his. If he is not here next Sabbath, he will send someone."

Leone suppressed a rising sigh, and the accompanying wish that Earle would return. She had no right to indulge in either. If Earle's presence were needed elsewhere, she hoped she was brave enough, and true enough, not to want him here. She would not retard his work even in thought. And so she bravely strove to keep him out of her mind, lest some longing desire of hers should cause him to fly from duty; to the woman he so tenderly loved, and to the woman who loved him so hopelessly, in return. For she knew at last that she did love Earle, as well, even, as he loved her; but it was a hopeless love. Celeste had died without disclosing the secret, and she would never entail upon future generations the possible shame of her birth. If Harper could be found—but, even then, there was little hope. Circumstances all

pointed to her as the French woman's child. And so Leone, like the brave philosopher that she was, put it resolutely out of her mind, and proceeded to enjoy life as best she could. In the first place, there was always something to do; and the man or woman who has something to do can never be entirely miserable.

The first thing she did was to find her old faithful servitors. She soon learned that Tom and Kitty were married, and had a neat little home of their own, and Mrs. Marks lived with them. Mrs. Earle told her where to find them, for she said she had always kept an eye on them for this very purpose. She had always expected Leone to come back to see them, if for nothing else.

It was a bright autumn morning when Leone knocked at the door of the modest little cottage, down by the river, where Tom and Kitty lived. It was opened by Mrs. Marks herself, who stood for one brief moment looking at her visitor. And then she exclaimed: "*Dear heart alive!* Come quick, Kitty! She's come to see us at last, just as I always knew she would!" And her motherly arms were folded around her old-time mistress, who was crying on her bosom. For a time, she had slipped back to the sorrowful morning when she went away from Glendale, and it seemed that not a day had elapsed

since then. But Kitty's voice recalled her to the present:

"It is never Miss Leone come back again, is it, mother?"

"Yes, Kitty. It is Miss Leone, or what they've left of her, which isn't much. See how poor and pale the poor dear is. Oh! I said when she went away, that she would break her heart, and I know she has!"

Leone laughed and cried in the same breath, as she dried her eyes and turned to greet Kitty; and she was conscious of wishing that Grandma Trent was like good, honest Mrs. Marks. But she strangled the wish, as disloyal to her father's mother. But what a long, eager talk they had, when Leone was installed in the best chair and the best room, and promised to stay to dinner, which Kitty secretly determined to make a "stunning affair," for Miss Leone's sake. And in the course of the conversation, when it came out that Leone was a Christian, Kitty, who had overheard it, rushed from the kitchen stove to the humble parlor door, with the words:

"Are you, Miss Leone? Bless the Lord! I know Tom will just die with joy when he hears it."

"I should hope Tom would not die," Leone replied, with a twinkle in her eyes at Kitty's words, but more gravely continued: "But I owe my faith in God to dear, honest Tom's ef-

forts. He was the first to open my eyes to my hopeless, helpless condition. A soul without faith in God, is like a stranded vessel, but the moment we get sight of Christ, then we have found the link between this world and the world to come."

"Amen!" responded a deep, hearty voice in the door, and honest Tom Tipton, who had come in from his work, and overheard Leone, and recognized her, came forward with tears in his eyes, to greet this woman, over whom he had secretly cried when she went away, because she was not a Christian. Now he felt that she must be a bright and shining light, or she couldn't talk so beautifully and right to the point. And he was quite abashed at memory of the letter he had presumed to write to her, years ago, until Leone said:

"God bless you, Tom, for giving me that letter. It was the first to make me think of sacred things."

"Was it really, Miss Leone?"

"It really was."

"Then I've reward enough."

Kitty's dinner was a grand success, and she was happy. And those simple, honest people treasured this visit of Leone's as one of the bright spots in their lives It is such a little thing, sometimes. for us to add to the happiness of others.

The grave on the hill was not forgotten, and Leone's first visit showed that it had not been neglected, and she strongly suspected that it was further evidence of the faithful remembrance of Tom and Mrs. Marks. But how different were her thoughts today, from the hopeless misery of the day when she stood, the only mourner, by her father's grave. Then there was nothing between that world and this; no knowledge, nor even hope, of a hereafter; only the hopeless kind of misery that one feels when he thinks the end has come. It was a broken chain, then, that began and ended here.

"A broken chain," she mused, "and an exceedingly rusty one! I had not found that shining link, which exceeds the light of day. I had no certainty of a God, nor of the resurrection of the dead. I only hoped, in a dim, shadowy way, that there was a God, and that he was good. Oh, papa, papa! if you had only found the link between this world and the world to come! But I dare not question the wisdom and goodness of God. I know that his plan is perfect and that a perfect result will come out of it."

"Who lives in my old home?" she asked that evening, and Mrs. Earle replied:

"Mr. Kingsley bought the place, and has resided there ever since. He is quite wealthy, a widower, and considered a 'great catch,' by our

society belles, but no bait, however adroitly thrown out, has caught him yet."

"Has he changed the place any?"

"Not in the least, but has kept it in excellent repair."

The days passed away, and Saturday night came. "Earle will not be with us tomorrow," Mrs. Earle sighed. "But he will surely send someone to fill his appointment." And Leone retired disappointed.



CHAPTER XXX.

THE LOST SHEEP.

LEONE went down to the breakfast-room next morning, conscious of missing Earle more than she wished to; but feeling all the time that his presence was very near, and she should see him in the breakfast-room.

"It is only a wave of thought, wafted here. Earle is thinking of his home this morning, and possibly he has remembered me;" she mused, as she opened the door, when who should turn from an opposite window to meet her, but Earle himself, with out-stretched hands and smiling eyes? Not a word was spoken, for a moment, as he took both her hands in his and looked at her earnestly, while the minds of both went back to the scenes in the Conemaugh valley, and Celeste's dying bed. Leone was the first to recover,—a woman always is, under strong and mutual emotion. She seems to think that she *must* make an effort to come

back to the common-place, or lose her dignity. She said:

"When did you come?"

"Last night, after you were asleep. I came on the midnight train."

"And up already? Do you never want to sleep?"

"Not when waking brings me to you," Earle answered, forgetting that he was not going to tell this girl of his love, until she wanted to hear it. But Leone never for a moment forgot herself. She withdrew her hands, and soberly said:

"Please, Earle, don't. You know you must not talk like that to me."

"But, as I have said so much," Earle replied as quietly, "I may as well say more. You know all that is in my heart, Leone, and that heart tells me that you return my love. Is it well for you to deliberately wound your heart and mine because of doubt and uncertainty as to your birth."

"It is well," was the low-spoken reply. "You, yourself, know that it is well."

"I know that I love you, and would be proud to call you my wife. You are less generous to yourself than the world is to you."

"*You* are not the world. But it is not the world I fear. Hear me, once for all. We need never return to this again. While I could trust

you and your love, yet there is a thought beyond. My legacy of possible shame must never descend to anyone else."

She lifted her eyes for a moment, full of troubled and bitter thought, while a wave of crimson crossed the delicate lines of her face, because of what she felt it her duty to say, and continued: "No, Earle, it is better for us to go our separate ways. God clearly meant it so, or he would have made it different. We can be friends, no more."

"Will nothing change your decision?"

"Nothing, unless I except the possibility that barely exists."

"Then I shall begin to search for Harper."

"Even if he is willing to tell you the truth, it will doubtless be that I am the daughter of poor Celeste."

Earle did not tell her how much he had already searched for Harper, even advertising for his appearance; and as Aunt Helen came in at this moment, the conversation was dropped.

She, kind soul, had left the room on purpose, when she heard Leone coming, hoping that the momentous question might be settled for all time. And when she returned, she felt that it was settled, but contrary to her wishes and designs; and without a word, only a smile, she led the way to the breakfast-table, but soon set conversation in motion again, and Leone eagerly

joined in anything to take her distracting thoughts from herself.

"Must you leave us again, Earle?" his aunt asked, wistfully, as she passed him his coffee, and saw the evident sorrow in his eyes, that were at that moment bent upon Leone's face.

"I am to preach at C. tomorrow evening. I shall be obliged to leave on the noon train," was the reply.

"You will return during the week, I hope."

"Unless I make further engagements, I have none after Wednesday evening, until next week."

"Well, don't make any, Earle. Do let us have a little of your society."

Again Earle's eyes traveled wistfully towards Leone. But she did not even look up. Yet she knew that he was looking at her, and would have given much if she had dared to say, "Yes, do come back, and spend the remainder of the week with us." But she could not say it. Aunt Helen noticed these looks, and for the first time in her life felt angry with Leone. She said half-maliciously:

"Do, Leone, persuade Earle to come home Thursday morning."

Thus appealed to, Miss Trent looked up with unfaltering eyes, and gently asked: "Can you not?"

"Perhaps. As I said before, unless I make further engagements."

"You must not make any. You can refuse for once," Aunt Helen continued.

"What do you say, Leone?" Earle asked, speaking as naturally as if nothing had happened to mar the even routine of every-day life.

"I should say that no opportunity should ever be neglected to tell the good tidings to the world," was the reply.

"I knew you would say so," Earle replied, with a smile. "And I am not disappointed, but proud of the friend who dares to keep duty before my eyes, instead of pleasure. You are my good, true sister, I see."

"But a sister's feelings are never as deep as a mother's," Mrs. Earle observed, in an aggrieved voice.

"Perhaps not, Aunt Helen; but I have known sisters who were more self-sacrificing than their mothers. And it is conceded that the friendship between brother and brother, which means also brother and sister, is the strongest and most enduring of all love and friendship. Why should it not be so, when the tie of brotherhood is sanctified by our Elder Brother, Christ, and blessed by the Fatherhood of God. Furthermore, I am sure that the woman who is not a good sister could never be a good wife."

"I'll never argue with you, Earle, for you

always get the best of the argument." Aunt Helen laughed, restored to her good humor again, and wondering which was to be pitied most, Earle or Leone.

The lesson read in the church that morning was from Luke xv. And the lost sheep was particularly dwelt upon by the pastor, who could not help seeing, over in the farther corner, a slouchingly-attired man, past middle-age, with shifting, uncertain eyes, who sat as if uncomfortably conscious of being out of his sphere, and yet fascinated by the words he heard, to which he had been so long a stranger and an alien. And Earle Thornton read and preached that morning to the stranger in the corner, and prayed for the salvation of the lost and wandering sheep, and the stranger half-whispered, half-said, "Yes, lad, that's me," and then started up and looked around in stupid bewilderment, to see if anyone had heard or noticed him. But he was not observed, and settled back again in his place, and dropped his elbows on his knees, his chin in his hands, and listened.

He stood up with the congregation to receive the benediction, and then dropped back in his place again, and his eyes commenced their restless, uncertain wandering once more.

Earle, as was his custom, stood by the door to shake hands with his little flock, as they passed out; and the stranger in the corner watched

curiously, until only himself, the janitor and the pastor occupied the church. Then he arose slowly, and made his way deliberately to the entrance.

"How d'ye do, 'squire?" he said awkwardly, as he grasped the pastor's hand.

"You are a stranger here," Earle replied pleasantly. "Do you live in Glendale?"

"No, 'squire. I jest happened to strike on this 'ere place, this morning."

"Where is your home?"

"I don't know what home is. I hain't that there prodigal that you read about. I don't want you to think that, though. Goodbye, 'squire." And before Earle could detain him, he was gone.

"A queer sort of chap!" the old janitor exclaimed, tapping his forehead suggestively.

"I am sorry I let him go so carelessly. I meant to give him his dinner," Earle answered, as he went down the steps and looked up and down the street, but the stranger was not to be seen.

The circumstance passed from his mind, until towards evening, as he was taking a turn about the grounds, he saw the stranger leaning over the gate, and watching him curiously. Earle went down the path, and the man straightened up to depart.

"Did you want to see me, my friend?" Earle asked in his persuasive voice.

"I rather reckon as how you want to see *me*," was the enigmatical reply.

"Can I do anything to help you?"

"Not half as much as I can to help *you*."

The young clergyman looked at the intruder as though doubting his sanity, and that individual continued quietly: "I didn't exactly mean that, 'squire, for I think you might do a powerful sight to help me, accordin' to all that you talked about this mornin'. You see I hain't easy in my mind. Nothin' is clear and never has been. And if you'd let me stay around about, and do chores for you awhile, I'm a thinkin' as how we'd be a mutual benefit. What do you say, 'squire?"

"I hardly know what to say; and I do not really need anyone;" Earle replied slowly, not liking to turn him away, and yet not knowing how he could keep him.

"If you turn me off 'squire, I'm afraid you'll be sorry all your life. Mind I hain't threatenin' you; but I hain't long to live, and I'd like to stay right here, till I die. I've took a likin' to you, and the way you talked this mornin'."

"Who are you, my good man?" Earle asked, still eying him curiously.

"I'm that 'ere lost sheep, that you read about this mornin'. I've thought it all over, and I

know I hain't the prodigal, for I never had anything to squander in riotous living. I might be the piece that was lost, bein' as how 'twas a woman that lost me," he continued, in a lower voice, "but the woman that lost me will never come to find me, no, never, so I'm just the lost sheep,—that one that was lost out of the hundred, and you're the good shepherd that must find me. D'ye see, 'squire?"

"Yes, I see," Earle replied slowly, a light breaking in on his mind, an indefinable something urging him to take the stranger in. "I see. You may come in. I will try and find a place for you. But it would be less awkward, if I knew what to call you."

There was a sly twinkle in the faded black eyes, looking out from under the shaggy brows; a peculiar twitching of the muscles of the mouth. And then he said: "Oh, one name's as good as another for me! I've shipped under a score or more in my time. You can call me Jack, if you want to."

"Well, Jack, go round to the kitchen door, and get some supper, and then we will find a bed for you for the night."

"Thank ye, sir, thank ye." And Jack walked round to the back door, and knocked half-timidly. Aunt Helen, herself, opened the door.

"The parson said you'd give me my supper,"

Jack began, awkwardly removing his hat, and standing bare-headed before her.

"Oh, certainly! Come in. I will get you something at once," Aunt Helen said, half-wishing that Earle was not so eager to feed every tramp that came to his door, when Jack, feeling the mistaken impression he had made, hastened to say:

"Beg pardon, mum, but I hain't a tramp, and I never begged for anything to eat yet. I'm goin' to work here."

"Work here! what does Earle mean?"

"Just this auntie dear," Earle exclaimed, coming in through the dining-room. "You see he wants to stop here, and I'm going to take him in."

"But we don't need anyone, Earle."

"We will find something for him to do. He can make himself generally useful while our friends are here."

"That I can, 'squire. I can work about the house or barn."

"But where will he sleep?"

"In the barn, mum, in the barn. Don't worry about me. I can sleep in the barn."

"I'll make him a bed in the kitchen chamber. It might be rather close and uncomfortable in summer, but this winter it will do admirably."

"You make him a bed!" Aunt Helen ex-

claimed. I'd like to see the bed that Earle Thornton would make."

"Come up stairs, then, and see it," Earle said, putting his arm around his aunt and drawing her to the kitchen stairway. She followed him up stairs to remonstrate with him; but Earle was already pulling an old cot bedstead into shape and place.

"Are you really in earnest, Earle?" his aunt faintly asked.

"Aunt Helen!" Earle exclaimed, turning suddenly round, and she saw that he was not a little agitated, "I believe that Harper is down stairs eating his supper." Then he turned back to his bed-making again, while Aunt Helen with a startled exclamation, "Oh!" came forward with the words: "What makes you think so?"

Earle briefly related the conversation at the gate, and his aunt went after suitable bedclothes to finish the improvised bed for Jack.

"There!" she cried, coming back, and peering at Earle's work. "I told you so! You've got that sheet on wrong-side out, and the mattress is bottom-side up. I knew a man couldn't make a bed. "Go down to your tramp, and let me finish."

Earle vanished without a word; and when Aunt Helen entered the kitchen again, mentally determined to find out who the intruder real-

ly was, he sat back by the stove, complacently picking his teeth, and looking into the kitchen range, as if reading his future in the glowing coals.

"Who are you, anyway, my good friend?" Mrs. Earle asked, proceeding to clear away the remains of the supper.

Jack withdrew his gaze from the fire and answered slowly: "I'm that 'ere sheep that was lost, mum."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, what the parson read about, and talked about, this mornin', you know. I'm the sheep that was lost, out of the hundred."

"Oh! were you in church this morning?"

"Yes. And I just thought I was that sheep 'cause I never was bright enough to be the piece of silver, and I hain't the prodigal. I'm just that lost sheep."



CHAPTER XXXI.

SATURDAY EVENING.

"WOULD you recognize Harper if you should see him?" Mrs Earle asked Leone, the next day, as they lingered over their lunch in the pleasant dining-room.

"No, I have never met the man to know him. That day at Johnstown, when he went out with the doctor, I did not notice him, for, of course, I had no idea of his presence."

Nothing more was said on the subject, and that afternoon, their friends came from the city. They proved to be a merry and entertaining party; and with music, reading, conversation, and some nonsensical talk, of course, the time passed rapidly and pleasantly.

Thursday morning came, but no Earle. "He has taken your advice, instead of mine," his aunt said to Leone. "We will not see him again before Sunday." But he came Saturday, just before night-fall, contrary to all expectations, and quite a family party gathered around

the dining-table, for the gentlemen had come down to stay over Sunday, and the evening was given up to conversation and music.

"Are you still firm for Nationalism, Brother Thornton?" Mrs. Kirby asked, as she sat down near Earle, and started her favorite hobby.

"I believe my views have not materially changed, but they have been strengthened in some points, by all that I have learned within the last year."

"In what way?"

"There are some things that Communism would benefit."

"In having a common treasury, for instance," Cecile Stevens ventured. Somehow she could not give up that one idea, which in her mind predominated over all others. She found the care of her own property irksome, and would have been glad to have it managed for her. It would be much easier and pleasanter for her to ask for money and things, knowing that she would receive sufficient for her needs, than to feel that she must care for her own. But she would much rather feel independent, than ask and be refused, or quizzed as to what she wanted to do with it, and what she had done with that last dollar.

"Yes, I'm sure it would, if rightly managed. Do you not see it, Leone?"

Thus directly appealed to, Leone looked up

and answered earnestly: "No, I do not. I think such a turn of affairs would savor of despotism, and finally end in that very element which we as a nation have guarded against since we governed ourselves."

"Is there *anything* commendable in it to you?" Mrs. Kirby asked, a little sarcastically, for she did not like to have her favorite ism attacked by a girl who earned her own living.

"Yes, there is one thing that has taken very strong hold on my mind in the past season."

"And that is?"

"An equal distribution of labor. Some have more than they can possibly do; while others have not enough to keep them out of mischief. I think if the labor question were settled, and equally distributed, there would be no cries for bread, and no cause for crime. There would be no suicides from over-worked brains and bodies, no lingering death from rust and moth. If Socialism would do this, it might materially benefit the human race."

"Why, you are one of us, after all!" Mrs. Kirby said gayly. "I knew you must be. You will yet be a firm convert to Nationalism."

"I do not know; but I do not think so."

"But just think, some of our brightest lights have taken up the weapons of defense."

"All very right and proper for them, but I would be sorry to take it up because somebody

else had. I should want a good and sufficient reason, and trust that I might be guided by the Spirit to do what is right."

Mrs. Kirby turned away a little impatiently. This girl's independence jarred on her nerves, for it showed, by direct contrast, her own subservience to the opinions of others; and there is nothing that disturbs us so unpleasantly as to contrast our own faults with the virtues of others.

Leone knew that she had displeased Mrs. Kirby, and she looked timidly toward Earle, who smiled encouragingly, and continued the conversation with Mr. Lawrence.

"Miss Trent is certainly right," Mr. Lawrence said, "in regard to an equal distribution of labor; it would materially lessen crime and sin of all kinds. We all know that when a man has plenty of good, wholesome work and recreation, he hasn't time to plan mischief. To have more laborers in the different branches of industry, would lessen the hours of work for the over-worked, and also lessen the number of idlers, who have nothing but their own pleasures to consult;—and their pleasures usually result in sin and shame for some, and crime for others."

"There would also be more leisure for much-needed recreation," Earle continued, taking up the subject where his brother-clergyman

dropped it. "If we are to work for the welfare of the laboring class,—the class on which the nation and the world depends,—it would be well to give time and talent to this most important question. All our best, deepest, strongest, truest and purest men and women come from the ranks of the laboring class, often having nothing but a legacy of poverty, and a struggle for an inheritance."

"And yet this very poverty and struggle prove an incentive for advancement," Mrs. Kirby eagerly assented. "Why, there are many men and women who have carved out their own futures, in the face of opposition and self-denial, and are now bright examples of American independence, and no higher tribute than that can be offered to anybody."

"And yet," Earle continued soberly, "there are instances where men and women have had to become mere family drudges, and dull and stunt their intellect, because somebody must work, and there seemed to be no one else to do or dare. Now, if there were an equal distribution of labor, this could never be. For the labor question would apply to families, as well as communities. The result would be better health and happier tempers. When a woman becomes so nervous, from over-work, that she feels an almost irresistible impulse to throw and break things, it is time for her to take a rest. But

the unthinking members of her family look on complacently and say: 'She's getting irritable and cross. She's developing an astonishing element of ugliness;' when all the time the beam is in their own eyes."

"Well, Earle, I'm surprised to think you've learned so much about women's ways," his aunt exclaimed, laughingly. "I hope the present company won't think he means me."

"I hope they won't; for if they do, it will reflect very unpleasantly on me," Earle said.

"But it is to be hoped you'll introduce some of these arguments into your sermons, and make people see and understand them as they are. You and Lawrence here, should be able to rouse the dormant faculties of your congregations a little, one would think," Mrs. Kirby observed, complacently.

"I intend to enlarge on these subjects just as rapidly as it seems advisable," Earle replied.

"There is another thing," he continued, after the good-nights had been said, and the ladies had left them. "There is something that troubles me very deeply in this great social question. There is no doubt that that terrible stain on the world,—the great and dreadful social evil of the day, prostitution,—can be directly traced to our present social system; and I think nationalism, rightly applied, would cure it."

"How?" Mr. Lawrence asked.

"Women, all over the world, sell themselves, legally or illegally, for homes and maintenance. The woman who marries for a home and a support is, after all, but little better than her fallen sister. She has stamped her sin with a legal stamp, that is all the difference. Very often, by far too often, she sees no other way to secure a living. She has not been educated to do one single useful thing to make her independent. She must starve, marry for a home, or take to the streets. She is not strong enough to endure the thoughts of privation, and so she falls, either one way or the other. The woman who can take care of herself is never anxious to marry, and she rarely does marry, unless she marries for love; and that is the woman whose children rise up and call her blessed."

"And you believe that Christian Socialism will promote social purity?"

"I do; because it will do away with this wretched competition which is the source of so much trial to many. Every one would have a chance then to make an honest living. Then, a woman would not be compelled to take her choice between death and a life of shame. And a married life, without love to sanction it, can be nothing but a life of shame to a sensitive woman. You may think that this subject is too

delicate to handle; but it is one that must be handled sooner or later."

"For what reason?"

"A very simple one. The foundations of society are being undermined, and the morals of the world are growing weaker. Honesty, uprightness and integrity of purpose waver before the simoon blast of this deadly scourge of humanity. It is the primal source and cause of the many wretched creatures born into the world,—misshapen in mind, morals, soul and body."

"Seems to me you are using strong arguments, Thornton," Mr. Kirby said. "At least, I can't quite comprehend it. Do you mean that a marriage without love is productive of such results?"

"I do."

"Always?"

"Perhaps not always. And yet who ever saw a perfectly well-balanced organization, as the fruit of an incompatible union?"

Austin Kirby whistled a little, and felt a little confused. He was contemplating a union with a young lady toward whom he was carelessly indifferent, and who, he was well aware, had no particular love for him. But they were both of good family, and had confidently expected to be united, ever since they were old enough to understand the meaning of the word,

and it would seriously disappoint the parents of both, if they failed in their part of the contract.

"But what if one doesn't love *anybody?*" he helplessly asked.

"Remain single until you do love. A loveless union is unholy in the sight of the Lord."

"But I've known men to think they were in love, and when it was too late they found out that they were not. What about that?"

"That is one of the most pitiable things on earth,—a disappointed married life,—and its results can't help being more or less disastrous. Men and women should weigh this matter well, and be sure, before they take the final step, which is for better, for worse, and so often for worse. There is a vast difference between love and passion. Mere passion lasts only a few years at the most; but love lasts through life, and into eternity. Passion is selfish and seeks its own gratification; love never is selfish, never can be. Passion creates jealousy; love does not. Passion will soon burn itself out, unless based upon mental and spiritual fitness; then only can it be lasting. Men and women should know whether they are mentally and spiritually adapted to each other before taking so important a step, which is to make or mar their whole future lives."

Austin Kirby was uneasy; but this conversation weighed upon his mind, so that he was

brought to talk the matter over seriously with the young lady before mentioned, and she frankly admitted that she was glad to be free; for though she did not love anyone, she was glad she was not obliged to contract a loveless marriage. And before the winter ended, Mr. Kirby met a lady that he did love, and felt what a wretched mistake it would have been to marry without love, and then meet one's counterpart when it was forever too late.

Mr. Lawrence retired that night, thinking deeply. As a clergyman, it was his duty to warn the young people of his church against these evils; but it required a man of nerve and courage to handle these delicate subjects. This was an intemperance as deadly and pernicious in its effects as the alcoholic demon. In many cases it was the seed-germ of that deadly appetite which leads to riot and murder; for perverted human nature becomes capable of anything; and human nature *is* perverted when it is debased and prostituted, and nothing but shame and misery can follow.



CHAPTER XXXII.

SUNDAY MORNING.

"DOES Earle never get angry?" Mrs. Kirby asked the next morning as the ladies sat around the fire, while the gentlemen went out for their usual exercise, and Jack was getting ready for church, mentally hoping that the 'squire would talk some more this morning about the lost sheep.

"Rarely," Mrs. Earle replied, "Earle is probably as well-balanced and perfectly organized as a human being can be. I don't say this because he is my nephew, but because I think it is true."

"And so do I," Mrs. Kirby assented; "but I have often wondered why it is so."

"Plain enough! There was a perfect love, as near as an earthly love can be perfect, between his parents. They were well mated. And then, Earle is a Christian. Add that to his natural virtues and you have the whole, and a perfect whole. Were there fewer ill-starred

marriages on earth, there would be fewer imperfect lives. Did young people only understand and realize this great law of human life, the Millennium would soon come."

Annie Kirby laid her book down to listen, wondering if she and Mr. Lawrence were really meant for each other, or was it only a passing fancy, like so many others, who eventually figure in the divorce courts, or with Spartan firmness bear an unhappy life.

Mrs. Marcia Walden felt less interest. If she had made a mistake, it was too late to correct it, and she didn't believe she had. Such talk was all nonsense, anyway; but there was a certain class of people that must have hobbies, and they might ride them for all she cared.

Mrs. Stevens was always interested in anything new even if she forgot it forever before the day ended.

Leone perhaps showed the least interest, and yet she felt it the keenest She knew that a perfect love existed between Earle and herself, though it must remain unspoken and forever locked in the secret chambers of each heart; yet it was there, and neither words, deeds nor looks, were needed to convey it to the other. She merely looked up from her lesson-leaves, and then back again, while Mrs. Kirby replied:

"I agree with you, Helen, most heartily, and think it is every young person's duty to consid-

er these things prayerfully and earnestly. Doing this, they would no doubt be guided by the Spirit of God, and kept from making those rash mistakes that a lifetime cannot undo."

"There goes the first bell!" Marcia Walden exclaimed, putting up her book with a half-suppressed yawn. "Mamma, you'll create a sensation by going into church late, if you don't go and get ready immediately, as I intend to do."

"Perhaps," Mrs. Kirby said, smiling indulgently on her youngest, and then looking at Annie, who needed nothing but her bonnet and wraps to complete her church attire, and who sat serenely reading by the window, and occasionally looking over to the church steps, where Mr. Thornton and her affianced stood talking with the few early comers. Then she rose and followed Marcia from the room, to appear a little later ready for the morning service. Everybody in that church loved Earle Thornton, and no one ever tired of his sermons; yet they could not help agreeing that it was perfectly right that Mr. Lawrence should preach to them that morning; and if anyone was disappointed at not hearing his favorite, he did not allow it to become known. And there was no just cause for dissatisfaction, for Mr. Lawrence preached a very able and eloquent discourse. But Jack sat back in the corner and shook his head.

"I might 'a known it," he grumbled to himself. "I shall never hear anything more about that lost sheep; and somehow that took hold of me like nothin' I've ever heard or ever shall hear. But I know what I'll do. I'll kinder hint around to have the 'squire talk about it when we get home."

And thus satisfied in his own mind, Jack settled back in his corner and began to look round. He started a little at the clear, silvery, sweet soprano, that mingled with the other voices, and soared like a bird toward the vault of heaven.

"It's the girl that they call Leone. Yes, it's her." And Jack suddenly put his hand in his inside pocket, as if to satisfy himself that all was right, and drawing it out again, dropped his head on it, and remained in this attitude until the benediction. Then he rose with the rest, and bowed his head, with a queer sense that he too was being blessed.

"But no one or'to be blessed that don't do right," he thought, as he went out, ahead of the congregation this time, and hastened to the parsonage to stir up the fires, and do what he could, in his helpful way, toward getting the dinner. For Aunt Helen had already discovered that he was very handy about the house. He was still at work about the stove when Leone came through the dining-room, and said:

"Why, Jack, you are a treasure, and no mistake. Here you have the range in full blast, and the kettles on."

Jack turned suddenly and looked her squarely in the face; a curious, searching look, such as she did not remember ever having seen before. Then he walked toward the window, saying in a half-confused way: "Yes, mum; thankee, mum. I try to do what I can."

"Jack!" Leone exclaimed, continuing to advance until she stood near the poor lost sheep that had wandered away from the ninety and nine, "Have I ever met you before?"

"Don't know, mum, I'm sure, mum. I've been all over the world, or leastwise all over the states, which is about the same thing, I take it. And mayhap you've met me some day or other."

And Jack stood before her now, while Leone eagerly searched the swarthy face, saying: "It seems as though I had, but I can't place you. Perhaps I never have."

"Prob'ly not, Miss," and Jack dodged out of the back door, saying to himself: "I shall have to make a clean breast of it. It's mighty hard, though; but nobody can be blessed unless he does right. I'm satisfied of that. And she hain't to blame; no, she hain't to blame."

"Leone turned to help about the dinner, when Earle, coming in, said: "Did Jack persist in calling himself a lost sheep to you?"

"No; he didn't call himself anything; but I'm the least bit puzzled over him. It seems as if I had met him before."

"Can you recall the time and place?" Earle asked, thinking of the ruined church in flood-washed Johnstown, and the stranger who went out of the door with the doctor, and of whom he had a dim remembrance as faintly resembling Jack.

"No; I cannot. It seems more like a dream than anything else,—faint and far off, indeed, as if some one seen in a troubled vision of sleep."

At this point, Jack re-entered the kitchen, and walked uneasily about; but Leone proceeded to help Aunt Helen with the dinner, and nothing more was said about the matter.

After dinner, as Jack was wandering about in a troubled way, he heard a voice singing in the parlor, and standing by the dining-room door, he listened to the words:

"But one had wandered away from the fold."

"That is me," Jack thought, as he pushed the door softly open, and looked in. Earle saw him at once, and beckoned him in. He entered, and dropped on a chair nearest the door. It was Leone singing the sweet solo of the "Ninety and Nine," and playing her own accompaniment.

"And he went out after the one that was lost, and searched all over the mountains and everywhere else," Jack thought. "And, after all, it was nothin' but a sheep. Would the good Lord do that for me, I wonder?" And then, suddenly lifting his eyes to Earle's, he said: "Just ask her if she'd mind singin' that over again. I didn't hear the whole of it."

"Jack would like to have you sing that over, if you please, Leone," Mr. Thornton said; and Leone, turning, smiled brightly and said:

"Certainly, with great pleasure."

After the repetition, Jack got up slowly, saying: "Thank'ee, Miss, thank'ee. I'm much obliged." And he left the room, as quietly as he had entered it, casting a look at Earle, as he made his exit, which seemed to say: "I'd like to talk with you, if you don't mind." And Earle, interpreting that look aright, excused himself, and followed Jack into the kitchen.

"Did you want to speak to me?" he asked, at once, as he sat down near the window, while Jack made various efforts to appear at ease, such as stirring up the fire, sweeping off the hearth, etc.

"Well, yes, you see, 'squire, that is, I ain't no-ways easy in my mind yet."

"What about, Jack?"

"Why, you see, about that lost sheep. I

ain't certain-sure, at all, that I'm found yet. Not at all."

"Do you feel sure that you are the lost sheep, Jack?"

"Lord, yes; I know that. I've known it ever sence I heard you read and talk that mornin', a week ago, you know. And just now, when I heard her singin' in there, I knew I was kinder wanderin' round yet, in the briars and brambles, and among the mountains wild. No, I hain't found yet."

"And yet you know you are lost?"

"Yes, I know it."

"And you want to be found?"

"That's it, 'squire. I want to be found. I want to be happy like the rest of you here. I don't like to feel as though I was all alone, out here, you know, away from the ninety and nine, kinder wanderin' round by myself. It's lonesome like." And Jack's lips quivered, as he talked, and his eyes had an appealing look in them that went straight to Earle's compassionate heart.

"I don't know, Jack, why you can't be found if you want to be," he said in a low voice. "God is very merciful and loving to his children, and he wants you, even more than you want him."

"Oh, Lord! how he must want me, then," Jack said, breaking down entirely and crying like a child. "How he must want me!"

"Yes, he wants you, and there's nothing for you to do, but go down on your knees and say, from your heart: Here I am, Lord, take me, and do as thou wilt with me; and everything will be made clear after this."

And Jack sank at once on his knees, by his chair, and cried aloud: "Oh, Lord! here I am, out in the desert alone, and I want to get back with the ninety and nine. Come and find me, Lord, and tell me what to do."

And then Earle took up the refrain, and prayed tenderly for this poor, wandering sheep, who felt that he was lost and longed to be found. And as they rose, he continued:

"God has laid his hand on your heart, Jack, and you will know what to do. And you can not be a Christian, without obeying the commands of the Lord Jesus Christ. He will lead you aright, if you only follow him meekly; and I have faith enough in you to know that you will."

"Thank you, 'squire, thank you, I'll try. But I'm an awful sinner; and sometimes I get to drinkin', and carousin', but I don't never mean to any more, if I can help it."

"You mean if God will give you grace to keep from it."

"Yes, that's what I mean. I haven't been so bad, sence, sence, well, for five or six years, anyway." And Jack's hand went suddenly to his

breast pocket, and was withdrawn with a half sigh. "Man had his fall through a woman, and a woman, as Christ's mother, helps to set him up again. Yes, yes, I understand it. That's me; 'twas a woman made me fall, and another woman made me try to get up again. Queer, isn't it? but it's so.

"No, it is not queer. It is one of the ways of humanity, the world over."

"Yes, that's so. And I know I'm gettin' along some; for I don't feel revengeful any more to *her*—but I'm kinder sorry that I was so hard on her, and didn't do better by her. But you see, I felt as though she'd kinder wrecked my life, and I was desperate, and forgot all about what the Lord said about vengeance, and kinder took it into my own hands. But she's dead now, and I forgave her at the last, and she forgave me, and—and I hope I'll meet her again, and it'll be all right; for, after all, I did love her. But, if you'll believe me, 'squire, when a man is betrayed by the woman he loves, it'll make him more furious than anything else on earth."

"I do believe you, Henry," Earle said so naturally that Jack turned with a sudden, sharp exclamation:

"What do you mean by calling me Henry?"

"Nothing, only I think it is your name. You never told me that it was Jack, only that

I might call you Jack. And if you are going to be a Christian, you know, you cannot use deception."

"That's so, I can't. I hadn't thought of that. My name *is* Henry. You've guessed right," he continued thoughtfully, as he slowly left the room. And Earle, thinking it best not to press him any farther at the time, sat and wondered how he should communicate to Leone without rousing hopes that might never be realized. But he concluded to wait a day or two, and perhaps Harper of his own accord, (for he was sure now that the quondam Jack was really Harper), would tell the secret from his conviction of right and wrong.

But early the next day, one of those formidable yellow envelopes was brought to Leone, bidding her come at once, for little Johnnie was very ill, and would die. And with fast-falling tears, at memory of the lonely little orphan, who did not want her to go, but bravely tried to hide his grief for her sake, she hastened her departure, refusing Earle's kindly offer to accompany her, and was soon speeding away to Lakeside and Johnnie, who had contracted a severe cold, that ended in pneumonia, and—death.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

JOHNNIE'S MISSION.

SAM was at the station to meet Leone. His face betrayed his anxiety, and after the first greeting, she said stammeringly: "Is he——is Johnnie——? and stopped, not daring to utter another word.

"Johnnie is still alive," was Sam's sad reply; "but the doctor says he can't live," and as he stowed her baggage under the seat, and took up the reins, Leone saw that his lips were quivering, and his eyes were full of tears. Johnnie had crept into the heart of the stalwart young laborer, and Sam could not think of the patient, little sufferer, without a pain that he had never felt before. As they passed the cemetery on their way, Sam looked over among the white head-stones and gleaming monuments, and thought how soon Johnnie would lie here, in this silent city of the dead, and how lonesome it would be at the Trent farm with no childish questions in the evening-time, and no Johnnie.

"But then, Johnnie will be with Jesus," he thought reverently, and we shall all meet by-and-by;" for steadily, step by step, Sam had been led to realize that there is a hereafter and that Christ lived and died to save sinners; and Johnnie's innocent prattle had been the chief means of this realization.

But there had been a great change in Leslie since Leone went away. Those two short weeks had wrought an entire revolution in this girl, who had been fast falling into selfishness, than which no petty sin is more abhorrent. But Johnnie's words had probed to the very depths of her heart and roused her to a sense of her miserable failings. And then she missed Leone, and was just beginning to see what this patient, self-sacrificing girl was, and how vastly superior to her present self. And when Johnnie grew so sick, and looked at her with wistful, patient eyes, and made no complaints, then Leslie was completely roused.

"I'm afraid Johnnie is going to die," she said, while her voice trembled over the words, as she thought how kind his mother had been to her, in the old troubled days.

"Oh, sho!" Grandma Trent said. "He don't make no fuss, at all. I guess he ain't very sick."

"That's what troubles me, to think he's so extremely patient. Johnnie has never been himself since the flood."

"Poor little fellow! I don't wonder," Sam murmured, while grandpa said:

"Does Curtis think he's very sick?"

"Yes, he says he is seriously ill."

And then Leslie went back to the little bedroom, where Johnnie lay with folded hands and labored breath, and his great, serious eyes fixed on the window, that showed only a wet and draggled day, and a dismally forlorn landscape.

"What would you like the best of anything, Johnnie?" Leslie asked, leaning over the bed and touching his hot, flushed face with her cool, moist palm.

"Everything is all right, Leslie," he answered, in a hoarse whisper, "only, only,——"

"What, dear?"

"I wish you'd always be as good as you are now, and then you'd act just like Leone; and Leone, you know, made me think of mamma."

"Oh, Johnnie!" Leslie groaned, "I'm going to try to do right, if God will only help me. But it's dreadfully hard to be good."

"Not when he helps us, as Leone says he will. And tell her, tell her——"

"You must tell her yourself, dear," Leslie hastened to say, putting away the awful fear that Johnnie was going to leave her just when she needed him most. But the sick child raised his sombre eyes, and sighed, while the tears ran over his fever-flushed cheeks.

"It's a good ways to Christmas, and I'm afraid I sha'n't be here;" for Leone had promised to return at Christmas time.

"What makes you think you won't be here?"

"'Cause I dreamt mamma and Nellie came for me, and Nellie said: "You'll spend Christmas with us, Johnnie; and mamma smiled just as she did, you know, and then I waked up and just thought God was going to let me die, so I could go and see mamma and Nellie; and I hain't seen 'em, you know, since the day that the dam burst, and drowned everybody." And the big tears chased one another silently over the sick child's cheeks, and Leslie, in that moment, knew just how much Johnnie had missed his mother and sister all these months,—how homesick and heart-broken he had been, and never murmured at his fate. She broke down entirely, and cried, with her face in the bedclothes, and, kneeling, prayed God to take care of her and Johnnie, and make her a better woman.

"I have not done right," she thought, "Oh, no, I have not done right not even by Johnnie, I might have been like a mother to him, and a help to Leone; but have done nothing but think of my own selfish self, and that I was the most miserable person in all the world." And then she asked aloud: "Is there anything you would like Johnnie, anything I can do for you?"

"Nothing——only——only——"

"Don't be afraid to tell me."

"I would like to see Leone," he answered in a low voice, "but it's a good while to wait, and I don't want anybody to spoil her visit by letting her know I'm sick. She wouldn't enjoy it a bit after that, you know."

And Leslie went straight to Sam with this remark, and Sam said: "She will never forgive us, if we let Johnnie die without sending for her, and I almost know, Leslie, that he is going to die."

Leslie's lips quivered. Her heart was sore and tender, just then, and it was very hard to feel that Johnnie would never be well, but that soon there would be a new grave in the cemetery. And then she thought of that other lonely, unvisited grave, and her conscience smote her heavily, as she thought how kind and motherly Celeste had been to her in those last years, and how she had striven to atone for those early years of sin.

"I will go to her grave," she thought, "as soon as possible, and plant flowers there in the spring. That is all that I can do now." And in Leslie's heart there rose a feeling of regret and pain, that comes into many hearts when it is too late, and the flowers that were withheld from the living are piled high over the dead.

Ever since that day that Johnnie spent with

him among the yellow corn, Jonathan Trent had been seriously thinking of God and his eternal love and truth, and wondering why he had been so blind all these years, and thought and read so little. At first, he took down the old, unused Bible, and went slyly out by himself, to read a little here, and a little there; but gradually he grew bolder, and would read in the house, particularly after Sam set the example, and conscience whispered to him: "If you are ashamed to be seen reading the Bible, you had better let it alone."

"I think Johnnie and Leone are right," he thought, "and, Oh! that I had known of such a hope for the human race in my younger days."

Not so with his wife! Naturally contrary and wilful, she had no desire to believe, but always said: "Oh, sho! I've read the Bible through and through. I guess I know as much about it as any of you."

Still she was growing secretly uneasy, and dreaded the thought of death, as something terrible. And when Johnnie grew so sick, the dread increased, and she took to calling at Mr. Simmons' and talking over the mysteries of death.

"It is nothing to die," Mrs. Simmons said, "nothing at all. It's only a transition from this life to the next. And some don't even

know that they have died, and think it is very cruel that their friends don't notice them any more. Why, when Alexander died, he came back to me, and gave me a sound scolding for not paying more attention to him when he was near."

Mrs. Trent sighed, as she thought of Bernard and Eliza, and wondered if they had come to her and felt grieved that she did not speak to them. She said:

"But I never believed that there was any hereafter, but that when we died, that was the end. I thought there was nothing but this life to live."

"I know your people are infidels," was the blunt reply, "but you'll find that there *is* another life. When you die here, you've only begun to live there."

"I would feel better about it if I was sure," Mrs. Trent said. "Someway I hate to die, thinking that the end of me."

"Oh, it isn't! and this Spiritualism is a blessed help and hope to us. It's the only real, tangible proof we have of another life."

"But what about God?"

"Why, there isn't any real God, only what exists in nature, and the good in you and me, as well as the evil, which have been contracted into God and devil."

"What about Christ?"

"Oh! he was a good man, of course, a *great medium*, one of the greatest, if not the greatest, ever on earth. He was such a perfect medium, that the spirits could work through him and perform miracles, which could be done today, if we only had faith."

"And you really believe that our friends live and come back to us?"

"They certainly do. We know it; and it won't be many years till we can see them face to face and talk with them."

"How will that be done?"

"Why, my dear woman, don't you know that spirits materialize now, and appear to their friends?"

"Oh, yes! that cabinet performance that I've read about; but they're always proved frauds, you know."

"Not always. Of course, there are some frauds. But there can't be a counterfeit without a real, can there? Because some men and women go into this business to make a living, it does not follow that there are no good and true mediums. Why, there are ministers of the Gospel who don't believe a word they preach, but go into that business to get a living. It's an easy way, and it don't require any labor."

"I don't know but you're right," Mrs. Trent sighed. "I hope you are; but it seems too good to be true."

And then when Leslie told her of Johnnie's dream, she said: "The spirits appeared to him. I hain't the least doubt of it. They appeared to him, and it's a warning."

"I thought you didn't believe in any life after this," Sam exclaimed, a little surprised at the change in his grandmother's views.

"I never saw anything reasonable before, but it appears they do come back."

Grandmother had planted her feet on this first stone, which, however slippery and doubtful, was yet a stepping-stone out of the mine of unbelief. There was a chance for her to climb higher, to go onward and upward, until she could see the beckoning hand of the Lord's Christ, and know that Jesus was the Son of God.

"Jesus is coming after me before long, Grandma," Johnnie said, with wide, solemn eyes, "and I wish you knew him too."

"Do you really believe there is any Jesus?" Mrs. Trent asked, curiously.

"I know there is," was the confident reply.

"How do you know?"

"Because it's in the Bible. And Mamma used to tell me about it, and so does Leone."

"Will you be afraid, Johnnie?"

"Why no, of course not. Who'd be afraid of Jesus? He loves everybody. And you're never afraid of anybody that loves you, are you?"

"I don't know," Josephine Trent sighed.

"And we love him, you know, because he first loved us," Johnnie whispered, dropping off to sleep, and smiling even in his pain, to think he was soon going to see Mamma, Nellie, and ——Jesus.



CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE THREE RESURRECTIONS.

THE lowering December clouds hung darkly, and dropped their pitying tears on the grave of little Johnnie, as the sad-hearted mourners turned away, and left him out there alone in the cold.

"It's too bad!" Sam thought, looking wistfully back. "Poor little chap! it's too bad to leave you out here in the cold ground!"

And in the night, he got up, softly, and looked out of the window, toward the lonely graveyard, thinking how dark and drear it was, and Johnnie was always afraid of the dark; but then, maybe Johnnie wasn't there. Maybe God had sent Nellie and her Mamma to meet him. Who knows? And Sam went back to bed, fully believing that it was all right with Johnnie, and wishing he was as sure of a welcome in the kingdom of his Father.

"But perhaps Grandpa Trent missed Johnnie more than anyone else did; for Sam and Leone

were both constantly busy, and had not the time to think of the little orphan, only as he intruded upon them in their hours of work. Leslie was as usual occupied with her own affairs, although the old selfish self was gradually disappearing, and Leslie gave promise of a noble womanhood at last. Grandmother was reading continued stories again, the patchwork for a time laid aside, for thoughts of Johnnie and death and a hereafter came too often, when she was busy with her needle. The Simmons' theory wasn't quite sufficient to quiet her fears, although she leaned that way and hoped it was true; for as she grew older, she dreaded more and more to go out into that great unknown; and there is no sight more pitiful than an aged person without hope or faith, who knows there is one inevitable thing, that can never be dodged,——death. Josephine Trent knew this. She knew when the dread summons came, she should have to answer; and it was the nightmare of her existence.

But Jonathan Trent could not drown the thought in sensational novels. It became a great problem to him, and one that he longed to solve. It was the evening after Johnnie was buried, and Mary Deane had kindly stayed, thinking they would be lonesome, and her husband came over to spend the evening, and walk

home with his wife, when the conversation turned to the resurrection.

"It shows us so wonderfully and conclusively, that there is hope for the whole human race," Mrs. Deane observed, with a positive little nod, which Mrs. Trent was not slow to resent.

"Oh, sho!" she replied, "I don't know how you make that out."

"Why! what can be plainer than the death and resurrection of Christ?"

"Well, you don't know whether that is true or not."

"I don't know how anyone can doubt the proof of its authenticity; and then see how before this, he raised Lazarus, and the ruler's daughter, and the widow's son. I'm sure if one person can be called back from the dead, another one can. Don't you think so, Leone?"

"Certainly, I not only think, but believe without a doubt; and I believe that in these three resurrections, we have the types, or symbols, of the resurrection of three classes of people, or all the world."

"How?" was the eager question, on every side, showing how anxious those simple, earnest, laboring people were to learn of God's word and its mysterious unfoldments.

"You will see the difference in these three deaths, and the difference in their return to life. The son of the widow of Nain was dead,

—had been dead so long that the bereaved friends knew that it was time to bury him, and they were accordingly carrying him out to burial, when the Saviour met them. Now this was no chance meeting. God had planned it to be so, partly as a miracle to attest the Redeemer's power to his followers, and partly as a symbol for all future time, a symbol of the resurrection from a certain phase of sin, that Christ can bring about. It represents those that are dead in trespasses and sin, on the way to that burial from which there seems to be no return; no hope of ever giving up a life of sin, for one of service. But the pitying Saviour draws near, out of compassion for the mourning friends, and he touches the bier, and says, 'Young man, I say unto thee, ARISE.' And he that had been dead was now alive again. Notice, he had to touch the bier, which is equivalent to touching the heart of the sinner. The widow's son, being the first that the Saviour raised to life, may also be taken as a type, or symbol, of the resurrection of the church, which must be first raised when Christ returns to judge the world. They are said to have part in the first resurrection. We should not lose sight of this double meaning, for many of the Saviour's parables were given to cover more than one phase of human life and character; and his works, as well as his words, were parables.

"Now let us look at the account of Jairus' daughter. She was a little girl, only about twelve years old, who had just died. She clearly represents the class who stand just outside the fold,—good, moral, honest and upright, as the world goes, but unbelievers in the Word of God. But he goes *up* to her, and takes her by the hand, and calls, '*Maid arise*,' and her spirit came back.

"Then, there was Lazarus, who had been dead four days, and was in an evident state of putrifaction,—a type of the hopeless sinner, whom all the world calls lost, and cries out, 'Don't go near him; he is unfit for your presence.' But Christ does not think so. And the very account shows that it takes less effort to reach this kind of sinner than any other; only, no one ever thinks it's worth while to make the effort. He does not touch him; he does not go near him. He simply stands at the door of the tomb, and commands Lazarus to come forth, and he obeys, still bound by his grave-clothes, (sins), and Jesus turns to those near and says: 'Loose him from this bondage. Let him know that you are not afraid to touch him,—that you are glad to have him among you again.' That is all that is needed to complete the transformation. Christ forgives first, and then waits for the world to follow his example.

"But in these three instances the most power

was used with the maid, who had just died. The least of sinners required the strongest argument, as is invariably the case. The thoroughly honest and moral are the hardest to deal with and to reach."

"Why, Leone, you talk like a preacher. Have you been taking lessons of Earle?" Leslie asked coldly.

Leone colored vividly, but replied: "No; Earle has never mentioned this subject in my hearing."

"And all you know about it is what you think?" grandma said, in her sharp, cutting way; for the opinion of one of her family was of little account to her unless based upon popular authority.

"It is what I believe, based on the Word of the Lord," Leone answered quietly.

"The application is very plain," Nathan Deane hastened to say. "And he that was the farthest gone, needed the least effort on the part of the Saviour to reach him. He stands at the door of the tomb and calls aloud, 'Come forth.' And the wretched sinner, lost to all grace and earthly truth, hastens to obey the voice of the Lord, because he knows that he must obey. That voice reaches down into the desolate darkness, and the most miserable and crime-stained of all are glad to obey. The hour for their repentance and forgiveness has come;

and as Leone says, his telling the people to loose Lazarus from his grave-clothes, is equivalent to waiting for their recognition of their brother. Don't you see it, Mary?"

"Yes, indeed. I saw it the moment Leone began to explain it," Mary replied, with pardonable pride to think she was so quick to see and understand.

"And how easy it is to trace the comparatively innocent, but yet unsaved, in Jairus' daughter," Leone continued. "And how much greater effort Jesus apparently put forth to raise her! He didn't stand outside the door and speak to her; but he had to go up to her and take her by the hand. That is the way he always has to do to the stiffnecked moralist, who thinks he is good enough without the saving grace of the Lord. You see I know all about this. The time has been when I thought I didn't need any Saviour, and was just as good as the professing Christians."

"I see, I see!" Mr. Deane exclaimed. "And I was like the one being carried out to burial,—pretty well gone, until Jesus touched the bier that I was on, which in my case was worldly pride and ambition. How plain everything is in the Bible, if we only once have grace to see and understand."

"And about Lazarus, that also applies to

those who have died in their sins, does it not?" Mary asked, hesitatingly.

"As I understand it, yes. He corresponds to the corrupt and the wicked, who must be roused from their death sleep before they can be brought into a knowledge of the Gospel of Christ, which God has so plainly taught in his Word, and which only understanding, and the grace of God, can reveal."

But it was plain to be seen that Grandma Trent didn't want grace nor understanding. She was uneasy through all this conversation, and tried several times to turn it into another channel, as now:

"Have you seen my new red and white quilt, Miss Deane?"

"No," was the polite reply. "Have you been making one?"

"Yes; and I'll get it so you can see it." And Mrs. Trent hastened at once to display her quilted treasure, which was duly admired, and then:

"How much nearer this world would be to the world to come, if every one had such faith, wouldn't it?" Mrs. Deane asked.

"Yes," Leone replied earnestly. "Faith is the golden link between this world and the world to come. Faith is also a golden link that takes hold of the sinner on one side and Christ on the other. Without this golden link, a man

is like a helpless mariner at sea without an anchor or a guide, not even a compass to tell the north pole from the south.

"The golden link between this world and the world to come is certainly the Lord's Christ. He is the incarnate Word of God,—God made manifest in the flesh. This is the link that unites earth to heaven, and the powers of darkness cannot sever that chain, because of the link that was forged by the almighty hand of God. The golden link between man and Christ is faith. The faith that leads us to put our hands in the outstretched hands of the Son, and thus become reconciled to the Father,—the faith that leads the wandering prodigal home, because he knows that in his Father's house there is enough and to spare,—the faith that leads every sinner to repent, from love to the Father; and without repentance there can be no forgiveness."

"Did you read that piece in the paper about that new disease, Mr. Deane?" Josephine Trent asked, at this juncture.

"Oh, yes! about la grippe, wa'n't it?"

"Yes; what kind of a name is that, anyway?"

"French, isn't it, Leslie?" Mr. Deane asked kindly, referring to Leslie this time instead of Leone. But Leslie started, as though she had been struck, and answered briefly:

"Yes, it is French." And her mind went

back to the poor, erring, French woman, who was the mother of herself or Leone. But with the same rapidity of thought, Leone's followed hers, and their eyes met. Leslie's dropped in angry confusion, but Leone's looked with unwavering kindness and love. The time had come when poor, proud Leone was willing to bow beneath the chastening rod and own Celeste for her mother. Not so with Leslie. She was still groping wildly in the dark, hoping against hope that she was the legal offspring of Bernard Trent.

"What a beautiful thing faith is," Mary Deane observed. "I'm sure little Johnnie had the strongest faith and trust in the Lord."

"Of course he had," Sam answered, speaking for the first time. "Johnnie hadn't a doubt."

"I hope you haven't either, Sam," Mary continued earnestly.

"Sometimes I haven't, and sometimes I'm afraid I have."

"Sam thinks his faith shakes, but it doesn't even waver," Leone hastened to say. "He has his hand on the golden link just as much as we have."

"Thank you for your faith in me," Sam replied a little huskily, as he thought of the little cold hand, which, when pulsing with life and warmth, had led him up higher and higher, and he knew that Johnnie's innocent trust had done

more for him than all the sermons he had ever heard.

"And our very faith in the resurrection of Christ shows that we also shall be raised from the dead," Leone continued.

"How do you cook beans, Miss Deane? Do you always bake 'em?" Mrs. Trent asked, getting uneasy under this conversation, and determining to put a stop to it if she could.

Mrs. Deane kindly informed her, and they soon after took their leave, and Mrs. Trent unkindly observed:

"I don't like such dry visitin'. Why can't folks talk sense, as they used to, I wonder?"

"Why!" Grandpa mildly replied, "I was quite interested in what Leone said about them three resurrections, and I understand now, what I never used to see any sense in."



CHAPTER XXXV.

THE THREE THIRDS.

THE great socialistic movement of the labor question, the greatest international question ever agitated, was steadily gaining ground during the winter months of 1890, and the winter seemed destined to be marked with more than one peculiarity. While country people generally declared they never had seen so much mud and rain, and so little snow, in many states, and such a mild and open winter, yet the thinkers were watching with eager interest the social questions of the day, one of which would be decided upon the first of May, namely, the eight-hour day. At least an effort would be made to decide it.

"It will be of immense advantage in more ways than one," Nathan Deane asserted to the Barstow men, who still relied on his judgment and leadership in all questions of the day. We won't do as we did before, and wear a tyrant's yoke for years after other laborers had a ten-

hour day; but we'll have an eight-hour day after the first of May."

At this the men cheered vociferously, and Deane continued: "This eight-hour system will be a wonderful advantage to all laboring people. Of course, the man that does piece-work can make just as long a day as he likes; but I'd advise even him to think of something besides work. The trouble with the piece-work man is he knows he can work as few or many hours as he pleases, and he generally chooses to gobble everything up, and make himself, to use a rather inelegant but forcible expression, a complete pig. But the day-laborer don't need to do that. He is paid for a day's work, and a day is reckoned as so many hours. We have decided that eight hours a day is enough in which to do manual labor. That leaves eight hours for recreation and the improvement of the mind, and eight hours for sleep. And the extra two hours that four of us have been working, can be given to another man,—some poor fellow who is out of work,—don't you see?"

Of course, they could all see, and understand, and rejoice in the prospect of more time for cultivation, and a greater opening for the unemployed. Leone had been studying deeply on this question, and the more she studied, the more she felt the injustice of her position. Leslie had dropped back into her old, listless

habits of weak self-indulgence, and sat in the rocking-chair, or reclined on the lounge, reading sensational romances, with impossible heroines and adorable heroes. And Leslie sighed for the days of chivalry, and knew that she was not appreciated in this humble farm-house, with its homely, old-fashioned people, and her common sense sister.

"Leone has no romance," she thought, watching her bending her back over the wash-tub; for somebody must wash, and they were not able to hire such work done, with three women in the family, all counted able-bodied. "Hard work seems to be her normal condition, and I cannot do it. I am not able, and I shrink from it; but she doesn't seem to mind it, all of which is proof conclusive that there is plebian blood in poor Leone's veins. And her eyes are dark like Celeste's." And Leslie thought complacently of her blue orbs and fair hair, and turned over another page of her French novel.

Leone would not read French novels, but condemned them, as, in the majority, immoral and trashy:—another proof that Leone was intensely plebeian. All high-toned, fashionable ladies read French novels.

"Leslie is selfish and heartless," Leone was thinking at that very moment. "Here am I, wretchedly tired and miserable, and neither she nor grandma will offer to help me in the least."

This was all very true, and this was only a sample of all the wash-days at the Trent farm:—Leslie indifferently reading, Mrs. Trent reading or piecing quilts, and Leone doing everything about the house, washing, putting out the clothes, bringing in water and wood, (for Grandpa Trent, man-like, always contrived to be absent on wash-day), tidying up the kitchen, and getting the dinner. "If grandma or Leslie would only get the dinner," she had often thought; but grandma and Leslie did not dream of such a thing. Leone was there. Let her do it.

"The law does not compel anyone to work but ten hours a day," Leone thought, as she was getting the supper on the table. "But a woman usually makes about sixteen, and then goes to bed tired out, and wonders why her night's rest doesn't do her any good. How wicked and suicidal! I begin to see it, and I'll bring about a revolution right here at the Trent farm." And so she said to Sam, who had just come home from his work:

"Sam, I don't believe it's right to work more than eight hours a day."

Sam whistled, a long, low whistle of surprise, and exclaimed: "Coming out a full-blown Socialist, as I live! and you wa'n't going to have anything to do with 'em, you know."

Leone colored, but hastened to say: "I al-

ways believed in an equal distribution of labor, and that it's wrong for one to have more than one is able to do, while someone else is frittering away his life in idleness."

"That's it; that's just the talk; and we're going to have an eight-hour day this very year."

"For laboring people, I suppose, mechanics, etc."

"Yes; for the great mass of working people, the day laborers."

"Is there any provision made for women?"

"Why, the women wage-workers, or bread-winners, are included with the men, of course."

"What about the house-keeper?—the wife, the mother, the sister, the daughter, who has to attend to things generally. Is she going to have two-thirds of her time for sleep, mental culture and recreation. If she is, then I say amen to the three-thirds."

Sam whistled again, this time longer, lower than before, and sat down on the nearest chair. To use his own expression, he was completely floored.

"Look-a-here!" he said at last, "I don't believe Gonness has even thought of that."

"I don't either," was the dry response, as Leone lifted the tea-kettle from the stove and proceeded to draw the tea.

"I hadn't thought of it, and it is doubtful if Deane has."

"Probably he has not."

Sam was uneasy, and every now and then cast a curious glance at Leone, while she ate her supper. Somehow the great labor platform didn't seem quite as broad as it did before. A plank had been left out, which should have been inserted to provide for the over-worked woman of the house,—the keeper of the home nest,—the one on whom so much of the moral, mental, spiritual and physical strength of future generations depends. Of all classes in the world, the wives and mothers most need time for cultivation and recreation. And of all classes in the world, they usually get the least. Next day, Sam privately informed Nathan Deane of that conversation.

"She is right," was the prompt reply. "She and Mary are always right. But women will just have to assert their rights and take their time as we men do."

Sam said nothing farther, but concluded to watch the progress of events and see how Leone would manage, for he felt confident that she meant to do something. For a time, things went on as usual,—the incessant, never-ending round of work, cooking, washing, ironing, scrubbing, and the many things that a house-keeper always finds to do, and Leone had it all to do,—until one day in the spring, she very quietly and decidedly announced her intention of giv-

ing only one-third of her time to household affairs. Leslie shrugged her shoulders, and sipped her coffee, but took no farther notice of the remark. Sam's eyes twinkled as he said:

"That's right. Commence your revolution right here, at home, and in time you'll have as many followers as anybody."

"What if you can't do everything in eight hours?" Mrs. Trent asked crustily.

"Then it will have to go undone, unless somebody else does it. Eight hours a day is enough for anyone to labor. All the work that I do of any kind, henceforth, will be done in eight hours."

"Are you going to begin today?" Mrs. Trent mildly asked.

"I am."

Mrs. Trent cast an uneasy glance at the basket of clothes waiting to be ironed. Usually it took the best part of the day to do the ironing, with the other work. She could say nothing, however. She was afraid to oppose her granddaughter any farther, for fear she would leave them entirely.

Leone went about her work this first day with the greatest mechanical precision. She had it all mapped out, and meant to make it a success. She interspersed her busy hours with rest and reading and music, and before night, Grandma and Leslie made up their minds that Leone was

thoroughly in earnest,—particularly, as a considerable portion of unironed clothes lay in the basket at night-fall, and after supper, Leone left the table standing, and taking a book, sat down to read. An hour passed away, at the end of which Mrs. Trent threw the New York Weekly down and cried out sharply:

"Leone Trent! are you never going to clear up the table, and wash the dishes?"

"Not tonight," was the brief reply. "I have worked eight hours to-day, and I am actually tired."

"I wouldn't act like a fool, if I was you!" was the sharp reply.

"Leone is right, mother," Grandpa observed quietly. "She hadn't ought to do everything, and she's done enough for one day."

Leone bit her lip to keep back the tears, at this kindly defense, but composed herself enough to continue her reading, and Leslie finally rose and washed the dishes, sullenly enough, however, and like one who felt she was demeaning herself by taking a menial's position.

The next day Leone very quietly finished the ironing, all but Leslie's clothes. These she packed in the basket, and said quietly:

"There, Leslie, are your clothes. You can iron them when you please."

Leslie was thoroughly surprised and angered.

She ironed them at once, however, and then went off and cried over Leone's cruelty. But Leone had resolved never again to do Leslie's work, and wait on her, unless she was sick. Leslie rebelled and demurred, and cited her aches and pains and grievances, but Leone was inexorable.

"I will not be cruel," she thought, "to Leslie or anyone else. And neither will I be cruel to myself. But I will be just, and God helping me, merciful."

And so as the days passed away, they knew very well that Leone was in earnest, and would never change. She had divided her twenty-four hours, and was sure that she was right. Leslie began to take her part in the work, and to like it, particularly as she saw a gradual improvement in herself. The old lassitude and languor was wearing away. She was more like her former self. Life looked brighter and worth living now. Even Grandma seemed to have caught the infection, and said she believed she felt better to stir round and help some. It kinder limbered her up, and she didn't see how anybody could sit all day long and do nothing.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

HARPER'S SECRET.

SAM came home that night, bearing one of those formidable, yellow envelopes, that always send a shock of fear or expectancy along the nerves of the recipient, and handed it to Leone, with the words:

"It is for you; the messenger-boy overtook me, and left it for me to deliver." Her fingers trembled, as she took out the slip of paper, and read:

"LEONE: Come at once, and bring Leslie. Harper is dying. EARLE THORNTON."

To say that Leone was neither shocked nor surprised, would be endowing her with nerves that the average, nineteenth century woman does not possess. She sat down in the nearest chair, knowing that the end of suspense was near. But the old fear and pain and shame, lest she might be Celeste's child, had vanished. What if she was? It need not restrict her usefulness in the world. She could still work in

her humble way, doing the will of the Master. She would go out in the world alone, and carve her way unaided, save by the hand of God. Already, with the rapidity of thought, she had mapped out her future. Probably "Jack" was Harper. She had mistrusted it before.

"What is it? What's the matter! Who's dead now?" Grandma Trent cried,—always the first to question and insist on an answer.

"It is from Earle," was the low reply, and he tells me to come at once, and bring Leslie, for *Harper* is dying."

Leslie grew pale and frightened, and cowering down in her chair cried: "I cannot. I cannot. I believe the man would lie even on his dying bed. I don't want to see him. I cannot bear it."

"Don't be so weak and foolish, Leslie!" Sam sternly exclaimed. "Knowledge is much easier to bear than suspense. Whatever Harper has to tell, neither you nor Leone are in the least to blame, and while I live, neither of you shall want for a home."

"Thank you, Sam," Leone replied quietly. But Leslie only cried; whereupon Grandma Trent said:

"Land-a-massy! don't sit there and cry. Why should you be any more afraid than Leone? I wouldn't be afraid to bet that *you* will come out all right."

This plainly showed that Leslie was the favorite with her grandmother. Poor Mrs. Trent had never been able to forgive Leone for saying in the hours of her delirium, that "papa's mother was not a lady."

"What does Mr. Thornton know about Harper?" Leslie asked faintly.

"I think Harper is living at the parsonage, under the assumed name of Jack."

"You ought to go at once. You may not see him alive," Sam said; and then after a moment's reflection: "You had better get ready, and take the first train. There are hacks at Glendale depot, I suppose?"

"Yes."

"Oh, I can't go tonight!" Leslie demurred, growing fainter and sicker every moment, at the thought of ending the dreadful suspense, that had tortured her so long, and upon the uncertain hopes of which, she had been building her future. There was a dreadful premonition of coming evil in her heart, and the neglected grave under the larches was a deadly reproach to her now. What if Celeste was her mother?

"You must go, and at once. You are as much interested as Leone," Sam returned. And so, when the night train shot out of Lakeside station, Leone and Leslie were *en route* for Glendale.

The lights flared in the Glendale station

when the train stopped at last, and Leone stepped down, almost dragging Leslie after her, so helpless had the girl grown, from fright and fear of what was to come.

"I can never bear it, Leone," she whispered piteously. "I would rather die than hear that I am the daughter of Celeste Lascelles!"

"Hush, child!" was the half-stern, half-pitiful reply. "You do not know what you say. And I hope, for your sake, that you are not Celeste's daughter. Thank God, I can bear it." And Leone bravely choked back all thoughts of Earle, and her dreary, loveless future, if she was Celeste's daughter, and from the depths of her pity for poor, shrinking Leslie, she even prayed that it might be so.

"I'm here, Miss Leone, God bless you!" cried a cheery voice at her side, and turning, Leone joyfully met Tom.

"Oh, Tom, Tom! I am very glad!" she exclaimed, as the tears blinded her eyes, and made her voice husky with emotion. "It was very kind of you, Tom!"

"Not a bit. It wasn't me, at all, but just our Mr. Thornton as thought you might come tonight, and asked me wouldn't I meet you, as he couldn't leave the sick man." And the two girls were very thankfully seated in Tom's light, spring wagon, and driven to the parsonage.

"It isn't much of a carriage, Miss Leone,"

Tom said, apologetically, thinking of the carriage in which she used to ride, in the old days at Glendale, "but it's the best I've got, and it's mine."

"And it's just the thing, Tom. We don't want anything better. I'm not 'Miss Leone' any longer, but a working-woman, like Kitty."

"You'll always be Miss Leone to me. You may be a working woman, but you're a lady all the same."

"Thank you, Tom. That is the most genuine compliment I ever received."

Earle and his aunt were both waiting to receive them, and quietly and kindly welcomed each to their home.

"You are not too late," Aunt Helen hastened to say. "Jack, or Harper, as he really is, is still living, and still anxious to see Miss Leone, as he will call you. He declares he knew you the first moment his eyes fell on you in church. Did you ever know Harper anywhere?"

"No, I am sure I never did."

"He might have seen you, that day, at Johnstown, even if you did not see him," Earle suggested, and then to Leslie: "Are you very tired, Leslie?"

"Yes, *very* tired. Must I see this man?"

"I think you had better."

"And tonight?"

"Tomorrow may be too late."

"Have you any idea?" Leslie began piteously, twisting and untwisting her hands, still entirely unable to compose herself for the inevitable.

"Of Harper's communication? I have none," Earle answered kindly. "He refused to tell his secret unless you two girls were present. I tried to induce him to give it in the presence of witnesses, and save you the trouble and embarrassment of coming; but he would not. He said he should not rest in his grave without your forgiveness."

"We will see him any time," Leone promptly replied; "it does not matter. And I think I forgave him long ago."

In her heart she knew that she forgave him long ago. She knew that poor, misguided Celeste was the last one forgiven. And she was glad now that she had been led to forgive before she learned the secret.

"Are you willing to go now, Leslie?" Earle asked gently; and Leslie shuddered at his tone of pitying kindness. It meant too much. She answered briefly:

"I will go now," and instantly rose, anxious at last to have the terrible moment over. Earle walked with her, leaving Leone to follow alone. Aunt Helen had gone to announce their coming to the dying man.

"Leslie!" Earle said, earnestly and kindly,

"whatever Harper has to tell you, cannot be very dreadful, if your trust is in the Lord. When we walk hand in hand with God, the keenness and misery of earthly sorrows cannot hurt, as they do if our trust is in the world, and the good opinion of our friends."

"Yes, I know. That is why Leone is so serene and composed, I suppose. But it doesn't seem to me that Leone cares. I know she could not feel the disgrace of being Celeste's daughter, as I should; and I shall have to be the one to bear it. I know it now, since that horrible telegram came, and I have fought against it so long, so long."

And Leslie's form shook convulsively, as Earle supported her to the door of Harper's chamber.

"Come in," Aunt Helen said. "He says he is anxious to make an end of his misery."

"Here I am, Miss Leone, a poor lost sheep found at last," Harper's husky voice said, as they entered his room, and he moved his hand uneasily along the counterpane, as if in search of something. "Would you mind forgiving me, Miss Leone?" he asked piteously, as she unhesitatingly took his hand and pressed it in her warm throbbing palms.

"As I hope for God's forgiveness, I freely forgive you, Harper," she said in a low voice, and then continued rapidly, as though for Les-

lie's sake, longing to have it so. "You have sent for us to tell me that Celeste was *my* mother?"

"Not by a long shot!!" Harper exclaimed, even in his dying hour relapsing into his old time, jaunty, slangy air. "*That* is 'the other one,'" he continued, pointing his finger at Leslie. "But I don't hate her now. I don't want to injure her. Can you forgive me, that I ever did, Leslie?"

"Not unless you tell me the truth," Leslie cried bitterly. "You know you swore to persecute the legitimate daughter of Bernard Trent. Why have you persecuted me, if I am not she?"

"I think I have persecuted you both," was the low reply. "In making you think you were the legal one, I have tortured Miss Leone, by making her think she was Celeste's daughter. Haven't I, Miss Leone?"

"I am sorry to be obliged to say that you have."

"I see! I see!" Leslie gasped, sinking down on her knees. "You persecuted me in various little ways, but all the time it was one long torture to Leone; for she felt sure that she was Celeste's child, or you would be tormenting her instead of me. Oh, my God! can I ever bear it?"

"Are you sure, Harper, that your mind is right, and you are telling us true?" Leone

asked faintly. "I could bear it much better than Leslie."

Harper looked at her, with big, solemn eyes, and for answer said: "'Squire, will you just put your hand inside my pocket, and take out that there little package? That will tell you all about it."

Harper wore a woolen shirt with a pocket on the left side of the bosom, and during his sickness, which had been brief, he had never permitted the little package, on any account, to leave his pocket.

"Undo it, and read it," he briefly commanded, as Earle took it out.

"What is this?" Earle exclaimed, as he untied the package, which contained a letter, and a mourning handkerchief, dingy enough, now, but once fine and white, and black-bordered, and in the corner, the name "LEONE TRENT."

"He turned and looked at Leone, quickly and curiously. He had seen that handkerchief before, or one just like it, when she stood weeping by her father's grave. She was looking in a dazed sort of way, from the handkerchief back to Harper.

"How did you get possession of this handkerchief?" Earle asked, a trifle coldly.

"That——oh!——that——put it back, please, I want that 'ere buried with me. I've carried it night and day, ever since she give it to me;

and that 'ere little black-bordered handkercher has kept me out of many a mean scrape. You see, Miss Leone, it was me as was two-thirds drunk, and fell, that day on the cars, and you wet that little handkercher in water and done my hand up, and when I read your name on it, I just give it all up, and said I couldn't do it, and I didn't. I want it buried with me. You don't mind, do you, Miss Leone?"

"No, I don't mind, and you shall have it buried with you," Leone promised, as she took the handkerchief from Earle, and put it back herself, with fast-falling tears.

"Thank you, Miss Leone, thank you. Don't cry for me. I am Henry Harper, even if you did think I was drunken 'Bob Bassett' then."



CHAPTER XXXVII.

VARIOUS EVENTS.

AND so it was all over. Bob Basset and Henry Harper were one and the same. The secret was told, and poor, miserable Leslie was "that other one," the daughter of the French girl, Celeste. Harper died in the morning, begging Leone to sing the "Ninety and Nine," once more, and with the words: "Yes, that's me; I'm the sheep that was lost, but he went over stones and mountains, and briars and brambles, until he found *me*, the lost sheep," he fell asleep to wake no more, in this world. He had been a sinner in more ways than one. He had been a grievously disappointed man, and had gone far astray. But, with his quaint ideas of grace, he felt that he was safe in the keeping of Jesus. Who shall say that he was not?

The letter taken from Harper's pocket contained proof sufficient to convince even Leslie that Celeste was her mother. It was a letter

from the nurse who had exchanged them, or had given such an impression, at Harper's suggestion.

"I can never endure it!" Leslie cried, writhing in her humiliation. "I cannot! I will not! How can I have them all look upon me as an interloper, as somebody that has no right to live?"

"No one will ever know anything about it, excepting ourselves, Mrs. Earle and Mr. Thornton, Grandpa, Grandma, and Sam," Leone replied soothingly.

"That is the worst of all, to think *they* must know it."

A moment later, she uncovered her burning face and continued: "Somebody else *does* know that there is a secret about your birth and mine; and Oh! that I had died before telling him! I wish I could die, now!"

Leone sighed as she thought of unscrupulous Fred Barstow, but said: "You do not know what you say, Leslie. I wish for your sake it had been me."

"I wish so too. You could bear it, for you have nothing to lose!"

Again Leone sighed, as she thought of Earle, but hastened to say: "Were it not for deceiving them, they need not know, even now."

Leslie caught wildly at the idea. "Why should they know?" she cried. "It will make no differ-

ence to you. You will marry Earle anyhow. Why need you tell them that my mother was—*Celeste Lascelles?*"

With an inward prayer for pardon if she was wrong, Leone replied: "I will not tell them. You can tell them what you please."

She had a faint idea that she was doing wrong, that her pity for Leslie was leading her astray; but Leone was not perfect; she was intensely human, and was apt to fall into error. Besides, what difference did it make to her? she thought. Earle knew better. No matter about the opinion of all the rest of the world, if Earle thought well of her. And again, it would please Grandmother, for Leslie was her favorite. And so she tried to put the troublesome thoughts of deception away, by hoping that she was doing right, as it was all for Leslie's sake. Then she went down to the library, where Earle had asked her to meet him, after the last rites had been performed over the remains of Harper. The door was open, and Earle looked up as she stood for a moment at the entrance. He rose and came forward to meet her.

"You wish to see me?" she asked briefly, lifting her eyes for a moment to his face.

"I requested you to come here, Leone, and I think you know why," he replied, without releasing her hands.

Leone was trembling, but she knew that she

must answer, and so said faintly: "Yes, I know why."

"What reasons have you to offer now, against my claim?"

"None," she said, trembling more than ever; for Leone Trent, always self-possessed before, under any and all circumstances, was now like a reed in the hands of a giant.

Earle placed her in the chair that he had just vacated, and drawing another one near, sat down, saying: "When shall I come after my wife, Leone?"

Leone stole a timid look at her persistent lover, and dropping her eyes again, answered half-defiantly: "When the June roses are in bloom."

"Not before that time?"

"Not a day before."

Leone's self-possession had returned. The power was in her hands now. She could make terms here, by which Earle must abide.

"Hadn't your better say April?" he ventured to suggest, as he took her hand again, and drew a little nearer her chair.

"No, indeed. April is always uncertain. Too much rain and mud!"

"May, then!"

"By no means. May is an unlucky month in which to be married."

Earle smiled, even laughed a little, at her

superstition, but it made no difference. June was the month she had determined upon, and June it must be. And when Aunt Helen was told about it, she said Leone was right, and that a girl couldn't get ready to be married in a minute.

Walter Carrington had transferred his affections to a blooming, young, country girl, who was a thorough-going Christian worker, who privately informed Leone that she had great hopes of Walter, for he was regular in his attendance at church and prayer-meeting, and believed Earle Thornton knew more about the Bible than any other man he had ever met.

"But does he believe the Bible, himself?" Leone asked seriously.

"Yes, I think he does. But you know lawyers are not apt to be religious."

"Yes, I know. Some are not. But your prayers will have a great deal to do in his conversion. The prayer of faith is always answered, sooner or later."

Irving Howard and Morton Gray were both married to Glendale girls, and were both temperance men and Christian workers, thanks to the earnest endeavors of Earle Thornton and his aunt. * * *

"Are you going to tell them?" Leslie asked, tremblingly, as they neared the Lakeside sta-

tion, and all the old familiar landmarks were passed one by one.

"I shall tell them nothing," was the brief reply. "You can tell them what you like."

"It is very cruel of you, Leone. You might tell them about it, yourself."

Leone's lip curled scornfully, as in the olden days of pride and worldly strength, and she said: "You may call me cruel, if you like, but it is something to give up one's birthright, after all. I have agreed to bear the shadow of sin and disgrace for your sake, whether you are worth it or not. You can settle the affair to suit yourself."

She spoke coldly and decidedly, and Leslie thought her more cruel than ever; but determining to make the best of it, she stepped down from the train and followed Leone up the path, to the street, and then they walked silently home. Both stopped, as with one accord, at the iron gate of the cemetery, and looked over to that half-forgotten, uncared-for grave. Leslie shuddered, and turned away with a half peevish exclamation: "Come on!"

"Poor Celeste!" Leone thought. "Nobody is willing to own you, even now; and the shadow of sin is always dark and heavy."

But away over it all, seemed to come the words, as if from far-off Galilee: "She loved much, and much is forgiven!"

"Leslie!" she said, turning suddenly, and catching her sister's hand, "do you know what Christ said to the woman who was a sinner?"

"Don't!" Leslie said, petulantly. "Leone, why are you so unkind? Let us hurry home."

Leone dropped Leslie's hand, but a prayer went up from her heart that God would soften Leslie yet.

But Leone did not know of the terrible struggle that Leslie was even then enduring. It seemed that Johnnie's little, cold hands were clutching hers in a death-grip, and his far-off voice was saying: "Leslie, Leslie! you must not! It's wicked; it's awful wicked!"

"I will not listen," Leslie thought, bitterly. "Why should I endure a lifetime of suffering for another's sin? It will not hurt Leone particularly, as she knows better, and she is going to marry Earle."

And so steeling her heart, once more, and persuading herself that she was right, Leslie led the way home. At the gate, she turned and looked curiously at Leone, half-relenting, as she saw how pale and tired she looked; but that evil spirit that urges us on at times, was driving Leslie with an iron hand. She turned and walked swiftly up to the door.

"Leslie!" Leone pleaded, in one last desperate effort. "It would be far better to tell the truth. Nothing good ever comes of deception."

"I think I am going to tell the truth," Leslie answered bitterly. "I don't think Harper told the truth, however. I don't believe you or Earle Thornton think so, either."

It was the last bitter cry of Leslie's bitter heart. Down in the depths of that heart, she knew that Harper had told the truth, and that Earle and Leone were her best friends. But she felt that it would be an immense relief to lash them both, unmercifully, and she knew of nothing that would sting worse than an implied doubt of their honesty.

Leone lifted her head in the old, haughty way, and did not even deign a reply. Leslie laid her hand on the knob of the door, and opening it, walked in, with flushed cheeks and shining eyes, followed by Leone, with pale face and tear-bedimmed orbs. Even Grandfather Trent noticed the difference in their demeanor since they went away. Leone had always been the leader;—now it was Leslie.

Honest Sam's heart sank at the thought: "It is Leone, after all."

"Well!" Grandmother Trent cried, unable to wait a minute for the solution of the mystery. "Did he tell you which is which?"

"Yes," Leslie returned coldly. "He told us."

"And you are ——?" the old lady began, eagerly.

"Stop, mother!" Mr. Trent said gravely. "Let the girls tell when they get ready."

Here Leone sprang before Leslie, with clasped hands and tearful eyes.

"Oh, Grandpa! Grandma! Sam! would it make any great difference to either of you, if we didn't tell at all?" she cried rapidly.

"Not to me, as I'm pretty sure I know already," Grandma answered, in a confident voice.

"And you think——!" Leslie gasped, putting her trembling hand on the old lady's shoulder, and waiting for her further words:

"That Leone is the French girl's child! that's what I think, and what I've always thought, for all she don't consider her grandma a lady. I guess it's come home to her now. It's worse to have a mother that wa'n't no lady, than a grandmother, I should think."

Leslie shuddered from head to foot, but dropped her eyes without a word, until Leone asked sharply: "Leslie, have you nothing to say?"

"What should I say, Leone, excepting that you are my sister?" was the ready reply.

Leone walked straight to her room, and laid her bonnet and wrap and gloves aside. For the first time since she had learned to trust in God, she forgot to pray. It came to her later, however, with a decided shock, and she knew that

if she had taken it to the Lord in prayer, she need not have gone wrong, and Leslie would have been saved from sin. She blamed herself for the whole of it, and prayed earnestly that good might come out of evil; and the peace that came into her heart told her that her prayer would be answered.

In the meantime, things went on at the Trent farm as though nothing had happened. Sam went and came to and from his work; but he took to watching his two cousins with a persistency that astonished even himself. Leslie settled back into her old, indolent habits of novel-reading and castle-building, and Leone continued her household labor; but she never forgot for a moment, that only one-third of the day was to be devoted to work. No matter what she left undone, she resolutely adhered to this plan, saying that a woman's time was of as much consequence as a man's.

Grandpa continued his farm work in his usual slipshod fashion, showing that he should never have been a farmer; and Grandma started a new quilt, and subscribed for another story-paper.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

MAY FIRST, 1890.

THE first day of May, 1890, will always be remembered as a day that promoted the agitation of one of the greatest, if not the greatest, labor questions, that is, the eight-hour system among laboring men, mechanics, etc., a movement which, under judicious management, might extend to all branches of industry. It has been argued that farmers cannot have an eight-hour day, as there are certain seasons of the year when they must work early and late. Very well, let the farmer hire more help, eight-hour men, become an eight-hour man, himself, and, if necessary, have two sets of laborers. He certainly does not want to get in more than sixteen hours; if he does, he should be examined for lunacy. By a little management on his part, he can get his ten or twelve hours, and not work more than eight hours himself, nor allow his men to do soeither. I am well persuaded that this can be done in all industries, and

leave time for much-needed rest and recreation, and cultivation of the intellect, as well.

Somebody has aptly said, that the world has three great governors,—wisdom, authority and appearance — wisdom for the thoughtful, authority for the brutal, and appearance for the superficial. There is a great deal of truth in these words; for take the world from any standpoint whatever, and we see the marks of these three great governors, and the world divided into three classes, the wise, the brutal, and the superficial; and, alas! it is to be feared that the ranks of the second or third far out-number the first.

Appearance governed Leslie almost exclusively. Her aim was to appear well in the eyes of the world, and to look well in public. Sam saw this plainer than ever, as upon this morning, Leslie said:

"If I were you, Sam, I would be careful not to commit myself. If the labor party is defeated, you might be ashamed of your position."

"Nonsense!" Sam exclaimed, brusquely. "We shall get our eight-hour day, never fear; and even if we don't, I shan't be ashamed of being *right*."

"Why, no, of course not; but I would want to stand well with the world, if I were you. My idea always is to have everything look well."

"Yes, I know what your ideas are; and you

are willing to sacrifice everybody else to carry them out."

Leslie looked up quickly, but Sam had put on his hat and gone out, with a lingering look at Leone, that Leslie was not slow to interpret. Leone was busy clearing the breakfast table. Leslie had taken her book, and was swinging back and forth in the Boston rocker, that she had moved to the dining, or living, room, for her special accommodation. Somehow, she was uncomfortable under those scathing words of Sam's, and Leone's patient acceptance of the lot she had forced upon her.

"I wonder if I have been so very wicked," she thought. "I know it was not right to deceive Grandfather and Grandmother and Sam; but it would kill me to have them know the truth, even if I am not to blame." Leslie's book dropped in her lap, and leaning her head back in her chair, she closed her eyes, and continued to think: "He was their own son; and they do not look down on Leone, but seem to like her just as well, and Sam regards her as his cousin, just as much as ever. I am half sorry that I ever did it, for it would have been all over for me just as it seems to be for her."

And then, with a violent start, Leslie remembered Johnnie and much that he said in his last days. She moved her hand uneasily, as if to brush away something, and shuddered as she

seemed to hear the words: "You're not a good girl, Leslie. You're awful naughty. You don't treat Leone right."

"She stole a look at Leone, calmly washing dishes at the sink, and then tried to read again; but her book had lost its interest. Johnnie's name seemed to be dancing over every page, and with a sigh, she closed it, and took up her crochet work. But this was no better. Johnnie's childish voice was pleading, and his little, pale hands were pointing to a straight and narrow path; and Leslie threw her work down and wandered out of doors, but the phantom memory pursued her even there.

"A little child shall lead them," she thought. "Merciful God! have I been so bad, that even Johnnie could not lead me?" She went into the house again. Leone, like Mrs. Bagnet, was washing greens. But greens at the Trent home were not every-day diet, like greens with the Bagnets. Leone reached for the pail to go to the well for more water, when Leslie suddenly put out her hand with the words: "I'll do that. Let me get the water," uttered in a trembling, half-shamed way, for when, since she came here, had she ever before offered to do that, or anything else?

"You may, if you will, as there are several things for me to do before dinner," Leone re-

plied, and when Leslie came back with the water, she saw that there were tears in Leone's eyes. She took a pan, quite as though she were used to it, and going into the back room, got the potatoes ready for dinner. The clock chimed out the hour of eleven.

"It is eleven o'clock, now," Leslie said, without looking up, but with a scarlet flame in place of the usual pearly whiteness of her face. "If I work eight hours today, it will take me nearly all the afternoon and evening, won't it?"

"Until seven, if you work steadily. But it isn't necessary for a housekeeper to do that. Work and play can be pretty well mixed together, if one plans things right."

"After today, then, I'll plan right," Leslie replied, still without looking up.

Leone made no answer, whatever. She judged it best to say nothing; but inwardly, her heart was returning thanks that Leslie was waking up. She had discretion enough to know that speech is silver, but in many cases silence is golden; and if everyone knew when he had said enough, how much better it would be for the world.

At Barstow & Barstow's, a settlement was arrived at very much easier than the men expected. The ten-hour system had worked perfectly in the Barstow factory. The men had given much better satisfaction than under the old rule.

The Barstows had talked the eight-hour day over, and thought it would necessitate hiring more hands, yet they knew their policy was to yield to the demands of their men, for with Nathan Deane at their head, they were as immovable as a rock, and business was too good now, particularly as they made a great variety of boxes, and had added other work to that department, to have the works close, as they surely would, otherwise. Not a man was on hand at the usual opening hour, but as the clock struck eight, every man was in his place.

"What is the meaning of this, boys?" the elder Barstow thundered, looking black and grim.

"What, sir?" Nathan Deane respectfully asked.

"Not getting at work before eight o'clock in the morning. Pretty time of day for laborers to begin business, I should judge."

"I think, sir, that we have already informed you that we should not come here until eight o'clock this morning, nor any morning, hereafter."

And then followed the wearisome discussion, which we will not transcribe; but it ended amicably on both sides, and the men got their eight-hour day, new hands were hired, as they were needed, and the elder Barstow contented himself by saying that probably the next thing

would be a few hours' work in the forenoon, as it would soon be discovered a vastly important thing for laborers to have the afternoon to themselves.

May first, 1890, all over the world, was a day to be remembered; and it was a day to be particularly remembered by Leone, as the turning-point in Leslie's life, and a day that Leslie will never forget, as she often thinks how the memory of a little child did indeed lead her.

Although May first, 1890, or May first, 1891, did not fully and satisfactorily decide the great labor question, yet the agitation will go on until the condition of the working class has been bettered physically, mentally, morally and spiritually.



CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY WOMAN.

MAY was an extremely busy month with Earle Thornton. He had many appointments to fill and much work to do that could not well be put off any longer, for the time was near, when these new truths must be taught, and the world was ready to hear. There is no use of sowing seed, unless the ground is prepared to receive it, and Earle, being well aware of this fact, had plowed and harrowed his fields, until the soil was good, and he knew the seed would take root and grow, and produce an hundred fold. And some of his most important talks were upon woman, as she was destined to be in the twentieth century.

"The clergy are interesting themselves more and more in this subject, it seems," Cecile Stevens said, as she returned from a lecture upon this topic, given by one of Cleveland's most eminent ministers.

"Yes, and I am glad to know it," Mrs. Kirby

replied. "When ministers take up the subject and defend it from the standpoint of religious truth, the opprobium cast at the Equal Rights party must die out."

A full house greeted Earle Thornton wherever he went. He had studied the question of woman's wants and woes, and it had made a deep and lasting impression upon his mind. Sex and color can never govern the question of personal rights. And if a woman *is* a person, she has already a constitutional right to the ballot, and her presence in the legislature, with the right to cast a vote, could only add to the moral and intellectual resources of that body.

Does the prominence of woman in the church make it less prosperous? Every year adds to the number of women taking an energetic public stand for the Master, preaching and teaching, and otherwise leading; and no one any longer thinks she is out of her sphere, or has mistaken her calling. The schools grow better mentally and morally by the co-operation of male and female teachers; and there is not a branch of industry that woman has entered but is steadily improving instead of retrograding.

In the past years, woman has been restrained by custom and law, and been obliged to occupy the place that man has grudgingly given her. Now, man is not to blame for this. It is the force of education that has made him look down

on woman and assign her the place, that from force of education she has meekly taken, as her rightful heritage. But after nearly six thousand years, and in the dawn of the seventh thousand, woman awakes, and begins gradually to assert her rights, and to take her place as a co-operative agent with man, where God intended she should stand in every department of life, instead of in the few, to which she has been relegated by man. She is doing this so gradually, so silently, so persistently, that man is coming over the lines to meet her, and aid her, and every move that he makes in this direction, gives him a higher conception of human nature,—of manhood, and of womanhood.

Her liberty and influence have been limited by false ideas of her character. The barbarous relics of a barbarous age, false philosophy, crude religion, selfishness and lust have been pitted against her. Custom still retains much of animalism in society, which is unjust to woman, and the necessity of bread often forces her into a marriage, which is unholy and prostituting unless blessed by love and choice. The world looks on such a marriage as a very good thing for a dependent woman, but Christ sheds tears of pity over her fall. Marriage is a holy ordinance, only when sanctioned and blessed by love. A union between man and woman, without real and true love, is a form of prosti-

tution, stamped with a legal stamp, and the fruits of that union can not be perfect in any way. Give women the rights and privileges of men, to co-operate in all the industries, to earn her own living, and a marriage of necessity will be unknown, as will imbecility, deformity, and criminal monstrosities.

This was the substance of Earle Thornton's lecture on the Twentieth Century Woman, and wherever it was delivered, it created a profound impression. Woman in the twentieth century would not be the maimed and shackled creature of the past; but a real, living help-meet for man, who would regard her as something besides a pretty plaything, or a slave to his whims and caprices.

"I never thought of it before," Sam said; for during a business trip, he had heard Earle on this theme, and expatiated largely on it, as he reached home. "You see no one ever told me, and I sort of got used to thinking that man was in every way superior to woman."

"Well, isn't he?" grandfather cried, battling up, at once. He never could see why a man wasn't superior in every way to a woman.

"Well, it don't look that way, now," Sam said, half-hesitatingly, "and if a woman wanted to work in the box-factory, I'd say, let her come, and have the same wages that I do."

Would you treat her with respect?" Leone asked gravely.

"Well, I hope so. I hope I'm not ashamed of my own employment. If I could not treat a woman respectfully that worked at the same trade, I should think the work wa'n't respectable, and want to get out of it, myself."

"But men don't always feel that way, and think their particular field of labor is no place for a woman to enter," Leone continued.

"Men are unjust to women. I begin to see it, now. Why, look at the laws in Massachusetts, a widow cannot remain in her late husband's home but forty days, without paying rent. And it nearly always takes longer than that to arrange affairs, and set off her dower. I'm glad that Ohio has the grace to give a year, at least."

"You ought to go with Susan B. and the rest on 'em, Sam," Grandpa sneered. For though he was naturally gentle and kind-hearted, yet early education had given him some very peculiar ideas of woman and her sphere, and life-long ideas are not easy to get rid of.

"Don't talk like that, Grandfather!" Sam exclaimed, quickly. "I begin to think that only the unrefined and narrow-minded harbor such thoughts about women; and we all know you're too good to go into the ranks of inferior manhood who see things from their own standpoint

of littleness. I'm sure you'd bridle up as quick as I would, if any one dared to hint that the female members of our household weren't capable of taking care of themselves."

"I've seen them that wa'n't," Grandpa said, a little pettishly.

"You have seen men that wa'n't, either, haven't you?"

"I don't know as I have."

"Well, I have. And come to sum it all up, there are full as many men that lack brains, as there are women."

"They don't show it out as much, I'm sure."

"Perhaps not. Woman has been educated to think she didn't need any great stock of sense. All she did need was to dress well, look pretty and be admired. But, after all, a man soon gets tired of a pretty doll-baby, and longs for a companion, with sense enough to appreciate something besides her own prettiness. The Twentieth Century Woman will revolutionize the world, and I'm glad of it."

"You'd better lecture on it, hadn't you, Sam?" Grandpa asked.

"No, I haven't got sense enough. But I can appreciate the idea, and long for the dawn of woman's millennium."

"I hope Carrie won't disappoint you," Leslie shyly hinted.

"I hope she won't," Sam quietly answered.

CHAPTER XL.

THE STILL SMALL VOICE

CARRIE did not disappoint Sam. She came during the month to visit Leone and Leslie, and her growing intellect and the progress she had made during the year was more than apparent.

"And do you know," she frankly averred, "that poor, dear Celeste, under God, was the means of it all!"

"Thank God that Celeste was permitted to do so noble a work," Leone answered reverently, while Leslie dropped her head and sighed.

After all, Celeste had done more than she had. Her name was sung with praises. She had been a very great sinner; but she had repented and made an effort to atone. Leslie arose and wandered out under the orchard trees, sweet with their May bloom; but the haunting presence was always near her. Johnnie's accusing voice seemed ever whispering:

"Leslie, you're an awful naughty girl! you hadn't ought to have done it."

"No, I ought not to have done it," Leslie thought, clasping her hands wearily. "I am not happy now! Oh, God! when shall I ever have peace?"

"When you have done right," conscience whispered loudly, "and nobody is ever happy that isn't good."

Whenever Celeste's name was mentioned, which was very often, by Carrie, Leslie always left the room, and though Carrie knew there was a mystery here, yet she did not seek to unravel it, and no one volunteered an explanation.

"There has been a most remarkable change in Willie and John Marvel," Carrie said, in speaking of the two bereaved brothers. "They are both at work in the valley, and Willie preaches occasionally, but always about the goodness and love of God, and the saving grace that will finally reach to the uttermost ends of the earth. Isn't it strange, when he was once so sure that but a remnant could be saved?"

"And John?" Leone asked anxiously.

"Why, he is just as firm in the faith as you or I, and says the only reason he never would believe before, was that he could not think a God of love would select a small portion of the creatures he had made to reign with him in

glory, and condemn the great throng of humanity to everlasting death."

"Another positive proof of the power of love," Leone replied. "Love is the only saving power. It will reach and soften the heart, when fear will only harden and make it rebellious. Oh, if men and women only knew how to present the gospel in a manner acceptable to God, the great mass of humanity would not turn away in coldness and indifference. After all, the false ideas of theology are more to blame than the reasoning brain and throbbing heart of humanity."

"The fear of public opinion has something to do with it, I think," Carrie asserted.

"It has something to do with everything," Sam answered. "When anybody is willing to sell his soul to Satan for a few short years of public opinion, he needs regenerating, I should say."

And Leslie, without a word, turned and looked out of the window on the rain-washed fields, the little, muddy rivulets along the highway, toward Lakeside, and thought of the silent city of the dead, and Johnnie and Celeste lying so quietly under the weeping skies of May, and wondered why her life did not go out in the flood, nearly a year ago, instead of Johnnie's mother.

"I might have been saved from this last sin

of mine if I had only died then," Leslie thought despondently. "I have gone wrong from first to last, and no wonder." But calmer, purer and truer thoughts came to her afterward.

"If you know you have gone wrong, why not try to right that wrong. It is not too late. Do not find fault with the ways of your heavenly Father, for he knows best."

As soon as the clock struck five, Leslie arose, simultaneously with Leone. It was the supper hour, and she strictly adhered to her resolution made on the first of the month, and even found pleasure in helping about the house-work and sewing for the family. Grandma, too, had commenced once more to bear her part of the labor, which was smaller than Leone's and Leslie's, for, as they said, the stronger should take the heavier burden.

"How admirably you three get along here with your work," Carrie said. "It is really wonderful, for it is quite natural, where there are two or three women in one family, for the burdens to fall mostly on one "

"That is the way it was here," Leslie said, in a voice that trembled, despite her efforts to speak calmly. "Leone did it all, until I began to see how selfish I was."

"How much better co-operation is, in everything, even house-work, when it is thoroughly tested," Carrie continued. "I'm going to try

it, when I get home. I think I've been shirking without realizing it."

"I know I have," Sam frankly avowed. "I've let Grandfather do every chore, today, and I'm going out this minute and send him into the house."

Sam had a few days off, in honor of Carrie's visit. The next day was fine. The sun shone, the birds sang, and all nature carolled a song of thanksgiving to the Giver of all good. Grandfather and Grandmother were happy in the bright spring day, and the dawning of a new hope that this life was not all, and when death came, it would only usher in the life eternal.

"I don't dread to die half as much as I used to," grandfather said, "for it kinder seems, now, that I should live again, and know you all, and—and—when I get there, meet Bernard and Eliza."

"I don't know," grandmother returned, shaking her head dolefully. "I hope so, but we don't none of us know. It's easy enough to preach, but that don't make it so."

"Well, we shall find out sometime," her husband replied, while she continued:

"Yes, if there's anything to know, we'll know it soon enough."

Sam and Carrie were happy in each other's society and the prospect of the future that they were going to spend together, when Carrie

would come to the Trent farm to live. Leone was happy in her dreams of Earle, who was coming to take her away when the sweet June roses bloomed again. But Leslie was not happy. There was a heavy weight on her heart, a desolate feeling of pain, the weight that wrong-doing always brings to the conscience-stricken sinner. The coveted position of Bernard Trent's legal daughter, gained by deceit, had not satisfied her soul. Bearing the shadow of another's sin was not half as hard as the marks of her own sin. She had bitterly rebelled against the shadow of her parents' sin, but she had added her own to theirs, and the burden was doubly heavy and dark. The shadow followed her wherever she went, growing darker and darker as the days wore on.

"What is the matter with Leslie?" Carrie asked Sam. "She acts as if in deep trouble."

"Something is on her mind," Sam said gravely. "One can't be happy without doing right, and Leslie knows she has done wrong."

There was a marked change in Sam's language and demeanor since Leone first came to the Trent farm, showing the result of a good woman's influence wherever it is felt.

The day wore on, the sun went down, and the threatening clouds again arose in the west, promising another shower, when Leone came

suddenly to Sam with a frightened look in her eyes.

"Where is Leslie?" she anxiously asked. "I cannot find her anywhere in or near the house."

"I saw her going up the road about sundown," Carrie replied. "Perhaps she has gone calling."

"Leslie has no calling acquaintances, and she never goes out alone," Sam said, reaching for his hat.

"Where are you going?" Leone asked.

"I am going to find Leslie. Don't worry; I will bring her back, never fear."

But Leone did worry. She could not forget that Leslie went away once before, and was not easily found. Carrie said that Leslie went toward town, and so Sam hastened up the Lakeside road, thinking to visit the station first, for perhaps the unhappy girl was going away again. Opposite the cemetery, he looked over the wall in passing, as was always his custom now, since Johnnie died, when the flutter of a woman's garments, near Johnnie's grave, arrested his eyes, and something in the drooping, listless attitude, reminded him of Leslie. He opened the gate and went hastily up the path, toward Johnnie's grave. It was not here, however, that Leslie lay, but a little further on, with her face on the green sod of poor Celeste's half-for-

gotten grave, sobbing in the utter abandonment and agony of her grief.

"Oh, mother, mother, mother! Can you forgive your poor, wicked, unhappy girl for denying her parentage and trying to put the shame on another! or will God never let you hear me again! Oh, mother, if I had only died before I ever knew it!"

Even in that dreadful hour of agony and remorse, poor Leslie rebelled at the shame of her birth and the shadow it cast over her young life. She wrung her hands and cried in a moaning, pitiful way, that made Sam's sturdy heart ache with compassion. He stooped suddenly and lifted her up, with the words:

"Leslie! why have you come here, and what does this mean?"

"Oh—oh—oh!" Leslie moaned, trying to pull herself away from Sam, who held her fast. "Let me go! Let me go! Can I never have a moment's peace again?"

"Why did you go away and give us such a fright, and a storm coming up?"

"Because I wanted to come here and be forgiven."

"Why should you come here, Leslie?" and he loosed his hold on the trembling girl, who sank on her knees, and lifting her tear-stained face and swollen eyes, moaned:

"Because here was the place for me to come.

Oh, Sam, I have been so wicked and so bad! *She* was *my* mother, and *not* Leone's."

It was all told. Leslie was still now, with her face covered in her hands, and for the first time since the night that Harper died, she was praying. Sam leaned over and raised her up again, gently and tenderly, as one might raise a grieved child, and said:

"Thank God, Leslie, that he has made you tell the truth."

"Did you know it, Sam?" she whispered faintly. "I was afraid you did."

"I have known it all the time."

"Why didn't you make me confess, then?"

"'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, saith the Lord.' I knew when you were punished enough, you would have to confess."

"What will they think of me at home?"

"Never mind what they think. Don't think of that at all, nor what the world is going to think, but what God thinks. Let us go before the storm breaks."

Yes, there was a marvelous change in Sam since Leone came to the Trent farm.

CHAPTER XLI

BIBLE DOCTRINE.

THE inmates of the Trent farm-house were thoroughly alarmed. Where could Leslie be? The clouds grew darker and more threatening; the lightning flashed its forked tongues athwart the sky, the thunder muttered angrily.

"Something has surely happened to her," grandmother cried sharply, again and again. "Leslie hasn't appeared like herself lately. She's had to work too hard. This comes of your tom-fool nonsense about co-operation, and all of that silliness," she said, glaring fiercely at Leone, who made no reply, but continued gazing out of the window, toward town. "There's an awful storm coming up, and Sam'll be out in it too. Oh, dear, I wish some folks would mind their own business!"

Poor Mrs. Trent was relapsing into her old, unhappy mood, and venting her spleen upon

Leone, when Carrie's sharp eyes detected Sam and Leslie hastening toward the farm.

"There!" she exclaimed triumphantly, "Sam has found her. I told you she had only gone to call on some of her friends."

A few moments later, Leslie, trembling in every nerve, and supported by Sam, was rapidly telling the story of her deception.

"Celeste Lascelles was *my* mother, and *not* Leone's," she said, in a distinct voice. "I have been dreadfully wicked, but I cannot live so any longer. Can you forgive me, Grandma and Grandpa? I know Leone will; she has always been good to me. Only say you'll forgive me, and I'll try to be a good girl hereafter."

The lightning flashed into the little room, there was another crash of thunder, and soon the clouds lifted. The storm was passing over. Grandpa Trent put his trembling hands on Leslie's golden head, and in a low voice said:

"Yes, we will forgive you; but I'm sorry you did not tell the truth at first, for I thought all the while that something was wrong."

He did not say how disappointed he had been because Leone was not Margaret Dawson's daughter, nor how glad he was to learn that she was, but Leone knew it without his saying it. But Grandmother was not afraid to make her sorrow known. She broke forth at once into lamentation:

"Oh, dear! I was afraid it would be so, after all. But, Leslie, are you sure you are not trying to cover up something for Leone? Oh, dear! it will kill me to have so much trouble. It has been nothing but trouble from beginning to end, with my ungrateful children and grandchildren. I hope I'll never live to see any great-grandchildren, for mercy only knows what they would do."

Poor Mrs. Trent! She voices the sentiment of many an unthinking one. Let us hope that grace and wisdom will be given them to know and understand these things better in the future.

In the meantime, June had come with her buds and flowers. The roses were bursting into bloom, and Earle was on his way to Leone. He had an appointment at a way station, where he stopped to preach on the final "Restitution of all Things," which begins with the return of Christ, spoken of in Acts iii. 20, 21, and which is too often unscripturally regarded as a partial restoration. But the prophets give the strongest reason for universal restoration, and Christ himself confirms this, when he says: "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Thornton, but I cannot agree with you," Elder Brandon said, courteously, as Earle stepped down from the pulpit, "and I would like to convince you of your error."

"If I am in error, I am both willing and anxious to be convinced, and would rather never speak another word than to teach an untruth," Earle replied, as courteously. And as they walked along together, and entered the house where Earle was entertained, the conversation was continued:

"In the first place," Elder Brandon said, taking a Bible, and rapidly turning the leaves until he found the Scriptures he wanted, "How can you believe as you do, in the face of such evidence as this——? Why, if I believed that everybody would be saved, I never would preach another sermon, teach another lesson, attend another prayer-meeting, nor exhort another one to repentance. It would be time and labor lost."

"I am sorry that we cannot agree, brother. But in the first place, Christ has commanded us to preach the gospel to all the ends of the earth. We cannot disobey the command of our Lord and Master. I might take your ground and say, that if only a remnant are destined to be saved, and their calling and election is made sure, he evidently knows who they are, and will save them anyhow, whether I teach and preach or not. Yet, I am commanded to be a helper in the work, and I must obey the command."

"I see! I see! And I was too hasty. But

hear this, in regard to blasphemy. Matthew, Mark and Luke all record it as the words of our Lord. Matthew says, 'All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor the world to come.' How can you reconcile that with your ideas?"

"Easily enough," was the serene reply. "No tice, these sentences are both divided by the colon. In the first part of the sentence Christ says, 'All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men:"—not may, nor can, but *shall.* Just as we are told so many times to repent and be forgiven, and everyone that calls on the Lord shall in nowise be cast out."

"But see here, Mr. Thornton!" Elder Brandon interrupted. "How many have died in their sins, are daily dying, and will continue to die! How are you going to save them?"

"I am not going to save them; but they are going to have that second chance from which no soul will ever turn, after enduring the punishments and torments that his sins have brought upon him."

"A second chance! A chance of probation after death!"

"Certainly!"

Elder Brandon laughed scornfully. "How do you make that out?" he asked.

"I have evidence for it in the very next clause of the passage you have read: 'But whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in *this* world, nor in *the world to come*,'—proof positive that forgiveness will be granted in the world to come, as well as in this world."

"I don't know about that."

"Then you don't know about any of it. If you accept any of it, you must accept all of it."

"Very well, then, what about this sin against the Holy Ghost?"

"I maintain that when one has been a partaker of the Holy Spirit, he cannot sin against it. When one has been converted to Christ, he never turns away. The man commonly denominated a backslider was never converted. He came through fear and not love; when the fear wore away, he went back, and the last state of that man was worse than the first, because he had never been a partaker of the Spirit. His soul had never been satisfied. Thus, 'Many are called, but few chosen.' But when one is converted through love, he never goes back. He has no desire to do so. Love is the saving power of the world—the love that sent Christ that whosoever believeth should be saved. And

when every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, then every soul will be saved, for no one confesses Christ unless he believes on him."

"Well!" Elder Brandon replied gravely, "laying that aside, please look at Matthew xvi. 26:

"'What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?' is a direct question containing an *if*. It does not say he shall lose his soul."

"What about Luke xiii. 1–10?"

"It teaches repentance, and earnest desire to lead sinners to repent. You either misunderstand me, or I fail to make my meaning plain, but I never intentionally wrote or taught anything else but that men must repent; and when every knee bows and every tongue confesses, of course every one *has* repented. Please read further down in the chapter, dwelling particularly on verses 18–21. It shows distinctly that the kingdom of God is like leaven, which will in time leaven the whole."

"What about being born again, spoken of in John iii. 2?"

"It refers to the same thing—regeneration of the spirit."

"Well, then, listen to this," Elder Brandon continued, reading from Matt. xvii. 15, to the

end of the chapter. "What have you to say to that?"

"He who is founded on the rock, Christ Jesus, cannot be shaken."

"What about the second chapter of 2. Peter?"

"It is plain from beginning to end, showing the inevitable punishment of sin and wrong-doing"

"Well, see here, then!" Elder Brandon exclaimed at last, triumphantly, reading slowly from 2. Peter iii. 17. "Beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness."

And Earle as slowly responded: "It may apply to me, but I think not, as I am led away by no one's error; as I had studied these things out for myself, with earnest prayer for guidance, before I ever read a similar doctrine. I have no steadfastness only what God sees fit to give me. Verses 7 to 10, of the same chapter, are neither new nor unconsidered, but help to make up that faith in which I glory in the Lord: for our God is a consuming fire, and will burn and destroy all the evil, which is the work of Satan, leaving us pure and in his own likeness. As to Acts iii. 23, to which you refer me, there will be no soul which will *not* finally hear the prophet; else Christ's mission cannot be fulfilled, for he came to seek and save the lost, and he will not cease his labor until his work is done. All re

jections and punishment must therefore be temporal. I do not think anyone's faith can be so small as to think that God could make a mistake in these things."

"What do you make of Revelations then? What about the second death, and all that?"

"Rev. xx. 13 to 15, plainly tells us what the second death is, and that it utterly destroys man's low conditions, represented by death and hell. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire for that very purpose. Who will be found wanting when the mission of Christ is complete?"

"What about the fifteenth verse of the twenty-second chapter?"

"Please read the fourteenth verse first. You cannot pick out here and there a verse and prove anything correctly. You must take it as a whole. Reading both together, they are all still without; but blessed are they that do his commandments, for they shall enter through the gates of the city."

Elder Brandon closed the book, looked at his watch, and said: "Good night."

CHAPTER XLII.

THE JUNE ROSES.

THE June roses nodded in the breeze, under the soft summer skies, and wafted their fragrance on the air, while the ardent rays of the sun kissed their petals and whispered: "God is love." The syringia blossoms beckoned from the boughs, the sweet June pinks courted the gaze, and the birds swung in the tops, and sang their daily thanksgiving song, while the bell in the old Channing chapel rang merrily, telling all who were interested, that Earle Thornton and Leone Trent would plight their vows of eternal constancy, today. Carrie Forrest played the wedding march, and Sam looked on, both proud and happy.

It was well that they should plight their vows in the old Channing chapel. "Just the thing," Mary Deane said. "Don't you think so, Nathan?"

"Yes, since you mentioned it," was the characteristic reply; and each looked smilingly at

the other, showing the wonderful power of love and trust in each other, and that the laboring man and woman are among the noblest works of creation, and however lowly a man's estate, he can yet be nature's nobleman.

Our friends had learned this lesson well. The old dividing line between labor and capital was to them as though it never existed. They were all the children of one great Father, and in every well-regulated family, the children are equals. All the wealth of the world can not make one man better than another. The most exalted position in the land does not add to the real worth of a soul. Position is but the gift of God through the people. The President of the United States is, after all, but a servant of the people, and as utterly dependent as the boy that blacks his boots.

And so, as the wedding-party went out of the Channing chapel, and to the waiting breakfast at Grandpa Trent's, grandfather, as happy as anyone, thought:

"I believe they were made for each other, after all, and they're about right, I guess, in their way of thinking. If I'd only known these things in my younger days, I needn't have been so set agin the Bible. But the truth is I didn't understand anything about God, but thought he wa'n't goin' to save but a few anyway, and there wa'n't no use of my tryin', for I couldn't

be good enough to be among the few; and then I kinder got to thinkin' that there wa'n't no such thing as a God anyway, and no hereafter; and that looked more satisfyin' than to think I'd got to burn forever and ever, and my own mother lookin' on, singin' praises to God. Wa'n't that about the way of it, mother?" he asked, stating the last part of his thoughts for her benefit.

"No, I never did believe nothin', and I ain't sure that I do now," she replied, with her usual asperity.

"Wal, I begin to think there's something in it, after all. I'm sure I hope there is a good God who will take care of us all."

"I wonder if Miss Daniels'll watch things, and not let the cats get at the table," grandmother mused, breaking off from the subject, as she always drew away from anything that had no particular interest for her.

"Probably she will. I like that 'ere Mr. Lawrence firstrate; and I believe he meant what he said when he was prayin'. It seemed as if God could hear him talk, anyway."

"I declare, Miss Nellis' sweet-corn is only just comin' up," grandmother again broke in, and the poor old man sighed and looked over the fence at the sweet-corn, and continued home in silence, thinking how lonesome it would be with Leone gone, and only Leslie and Sam left.

But then, Sam was going to bring Carrie home in the autumn, and it wouldn't be quite so bad. And then he thought pitifully of Leslie, and wondered if she, too, would be leaving them, some day.

Yes, grandfather. Leslie is going to leave you when Carrie comes to take her place; but not for a home of her own; for Leslie, once aroused and brought face to face with light and knowledge, has resolved that she will be as brave as Leone could be under the circumstances; and so in her own way she told them what she meant to do.

"I mean to go out into the world as a missionary to the sorely tried and tempted working girl, who needs a friend and sister in every true woman that she meets."

"Good land-a-massy!" grandmother exclaimed sharply. "You're as foolish as Leone ever was."

"I don't think it is foolish," Leslie answered quietly. "Do you, Sam?"

"No," was Sam's prompt reply. "It is not. And yet I hope you don't think of it because you don't want to stay here any longer."

"No indeed!" Leslie replied. "I think of it, because I've lived an idle, selfish, useless life; and I'm sorry for the past, and want to do something for God and humanity!"

"Bravo, Leslie! You're the right stuff, after

all, and I'm proud of you," Sam continued, while Mrs Trent fretfully asserted:

"You uphold everything them two girls do. For my part, I think it would look much better for Leslie to stay here where her duty is."

"What's her duty here?" Sam asked.

"Pretty question, I should think. Children don't have no duties nowadays. Times have changed, and the world is progressin', I s'pose."

Leslie made no reply. The subject was dropped and seldom renewed; but she still adhered to her resolution, and time alone could tell whether she would ever change her mind.

Cecile Stevens and the Kirby family, who were present at Leone's marriage, returned to the city, more than ever imbued with the ideas of co-operation, on a grand and lasting scale of Christian Socialism. Earle and Leone went immediately to Glendale, where Aunt Helen remained to meet them, assisted by their most intimate friends, among whom were Walter Carrington and his bride; and we must not forget faithful Tom and Kitty, and Mrs. Marks.

Leone fits gracefully into her rightful niche, and the duties of a minister's wife do not seem hard or onerous to her, whose soul is in the work of Christ, and whose heart is mercifully compassionate toward humanity.

"Hear this, Leone," Earle said, reading the

lesson, one morning, 'Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you. Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten. Your gold and your silver are cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days. Behold, the hire of the laborers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them that have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.'—James v. 1-4. Do you see any analogy to the present day?"

"I see it is a wonderful prophecy, which will be fulfilled in these days. Do you not think so?"

"I do. And the hire which is kept back by fraud means unjust gain. And the cries of the oppressed, the down-trodden and the starving have already entered the ears of the Lord, who will in his own good time avenge his people, as he will always protect and care for all who trust in his name and the mercy that endureth forever and ever."



NOTICES.

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